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HISTORY AND HISTORIANS IN ANCIENT INDIA

D. K. GANGULY

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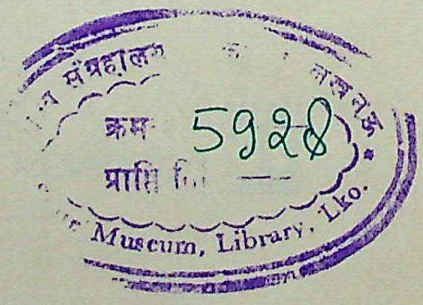

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Dedicated to my
Father-in-law
Binode Lal Chattopadhyay, MA, BL

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PREFACE

The task of reconstructing the history of ancient India is beset with enormous difficulties as compared with writing the history of ancient Greece, Rome or China. Whereas in these three instances the historian safely relies on genuine historical texts reflecting with the twofold principle of narration and inquiry the history of the contemporary and earlier periods, the historian working on ancient Indian history, handicapped by the absence of such texts (barring, of course, Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī*), is forced to rest content with whatever information is obtainable from literature, inscriptions, coins, monuments, sculpture and archeological explorations and excavations.

The historical information thus derived is not only meagre but also biased and contrary in nature, and as such the history of any part of ancient India compiled on the basis of such materials can hardly attain the desired level of excellence in point of accuracy, acumen and arrangement of historical phenomena in proper time and space. The problems arising from the limitation of his source materials are great and varied, and yet the historian can hardly afford to neglect his documents or to quarrel with his data, however inadequate, disjointed and incoherent they may be.

The key to writing the history of ancient India lies in the proper processing, assessment and understanding of the data and in formulating concepts and generalisations underlying the body of data. It is around the source materials, their merits, demerits and some allied problems that the present work revolves.

Yet such specific problems as the absence of genuine

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historical texts in pre-Kalhaṇa India, periodisation of Indian history, the state of both internal and foreign trade as well as the role of a money economy, particularly in the 'early medieval' period, have been explored and investigated with special emphasis. The author feels that the fact that historical literature did not develop in ancient India was due not so much to an inherent weakness of the Indian mind as to the influence of a typical Hindu concept of life that places the ultimate reality and goal of life outside the pale of history, encompassing the mundane experiences of human beings.

Another possible factor which in the author's opinion may account for the absence of a real historical text in pre-Kalhaṇa India might have been lack of interest of the Brahmin intelligentsia in engaging in the tedious, tiresome and diligent task of composing history. A parallel instance of lack of interest in explaining a historical phenomenon may be noticed in the ancient Greeks' predilection for monolingualism and refusal to learn a foreign language.

The hypothesis of the decline of trade and commerce in North India from AD 600 to AD 1000 that has of late claimed wide acceptance among historians, has been evaluated afresh in the light of our knowledge of the history of Orissa and Haryana, as gleaned from the available source materials. After having considered all the available facts, the author finds it difficult to subscribe to the view that trade and commerce slumped in the early medieval period.

Even if the theory of paucity of coins in this period be conceded, the author finds no reason to believe that a corresponding decline in the volume of trade and commerce followed. Non-availability of coins of a particular king, dynasty or period need not be taken as a symptom of economic collapse at least in ancient and early medieval India when the rulers were not zealous minters and not averse to the continuity of earlier and foreign coinage in their kingdoms. There seems to be little rationale behind the formulation that emphasises the correlation between gold coins and flourishing trade. The utility of gold coins in foreign trade lies in their use as bullion, and lumps of gold could serve as an adequate, if not better, substitute for coins.

Barter, exchange of commodities for other commodities

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without use of money in foreign trade, which persists even in the last quarter of the 20th Century, could well have been in vogue in early medieval India. Such a supposition assumes importance when it is remembered that payment in kind was the only mode of payment in the Indianised States of Southeast Asia where India had developed regular trade ties.

The old practice of dividing Indian history into three periods, Hindu, Muslim and British, has of late given place to the threefold chronological division of ancient, medieval and modern. Whereas in European history these are well-defined stages based on political, cultural and intellectual changes, in the case of India difficulties are still experienced in discerning ancientness and medievalism and in formulating historical assumptions.

The author feels that it is only in their primary connotation of being at the beginning and in the middle respectively in time sequence that the terms ancient and medieval have a claim to use in periodising Indian history. For the commencement of the medieval period the author suggests AD 1000, a date which is arbitrary but convenient.

In writing this monograph the author has been inspired by the writings of Professor DC Sircar and Professor RS Sharma, to both of whom he is greatly indebted. He is especially thankful to Shri Shakti Malik for the interest he has taken in publishing this work. The author is grateful to Dr N Goswami, Curator, Ashutosh Museum, Calcutta, for supplying him the photographs of some rare images, to be incorporated into the monograph. He is likewise grateful to his wife, Mrs Malabika Ganguly, for her exemplary forbearance in keeping him aloof from the worries of worldly life.

DK Ganguly

Santiniketan
West Bengal

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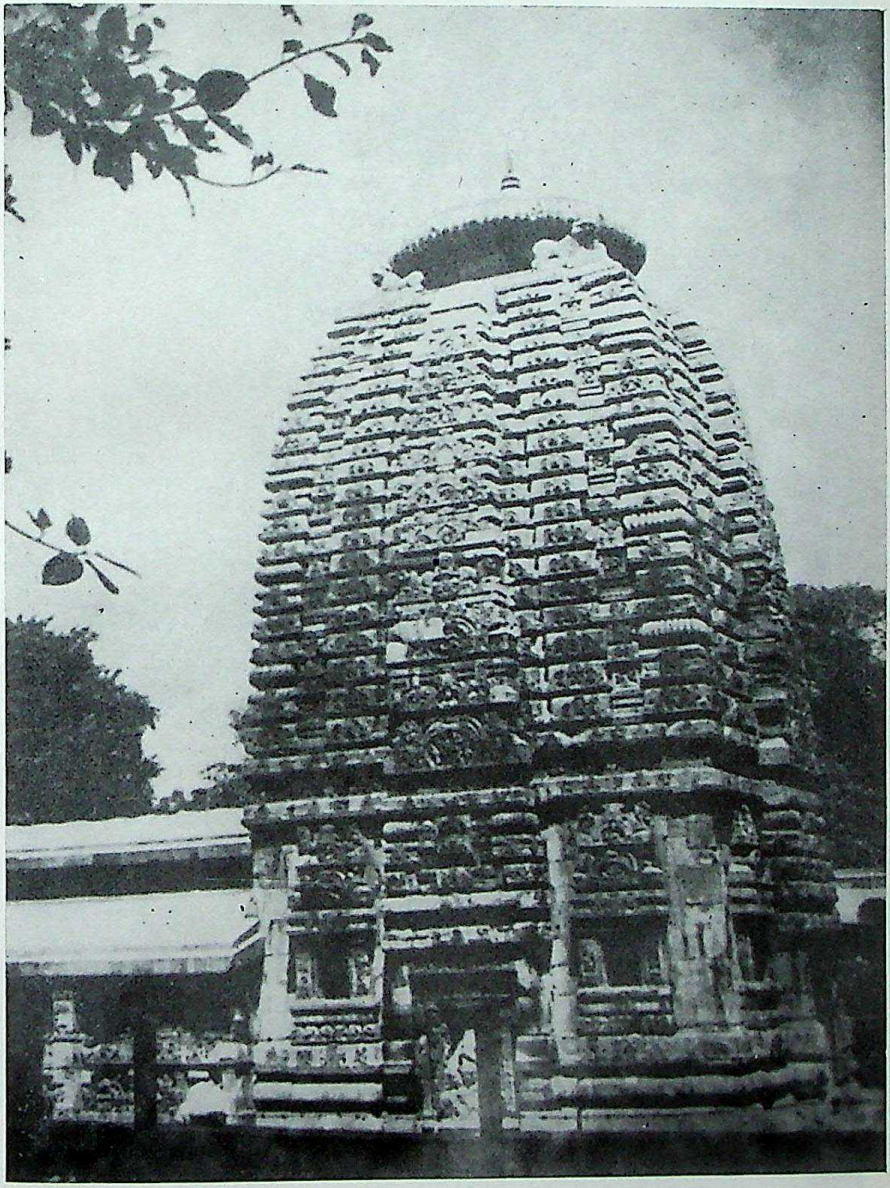

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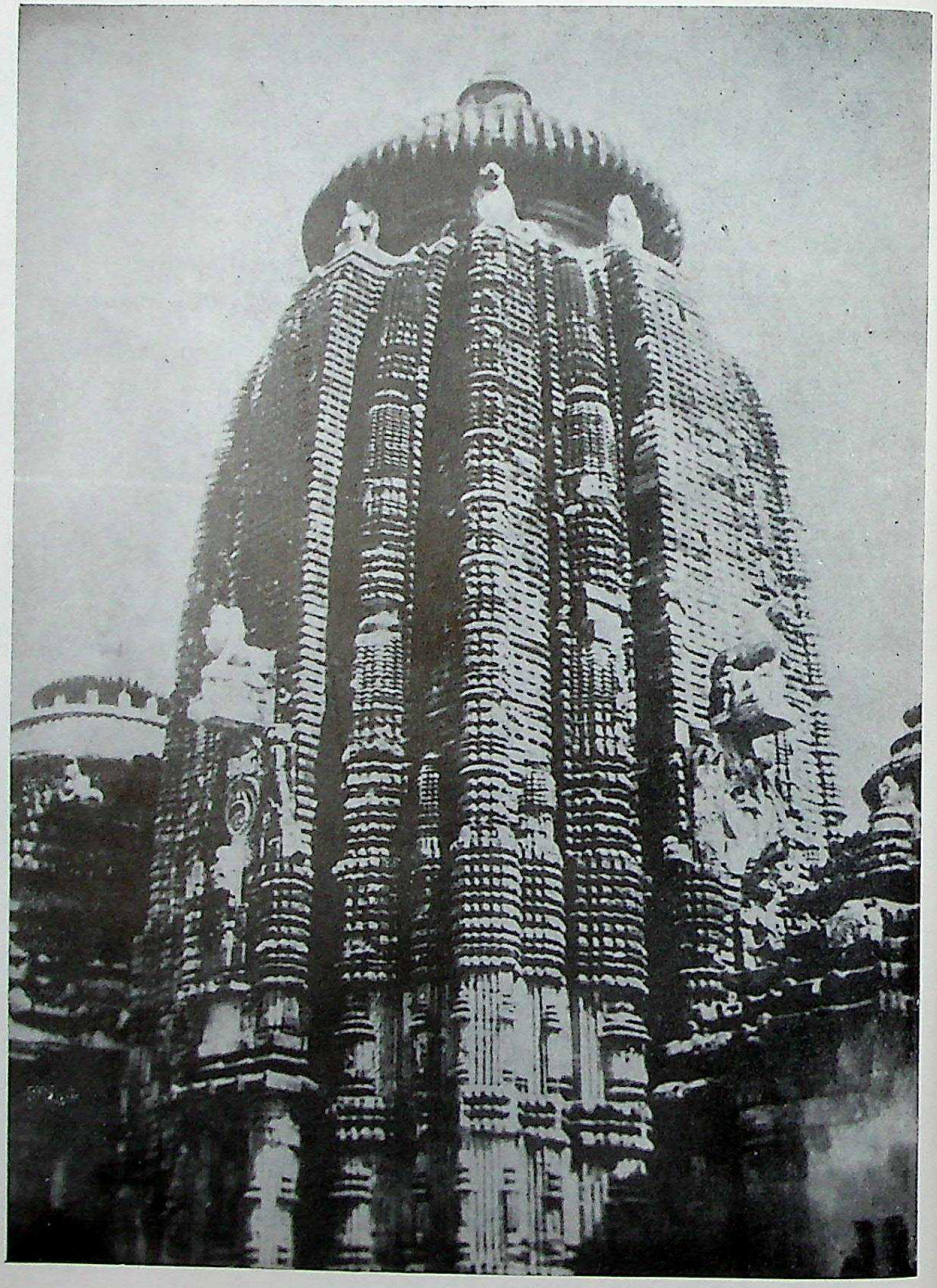

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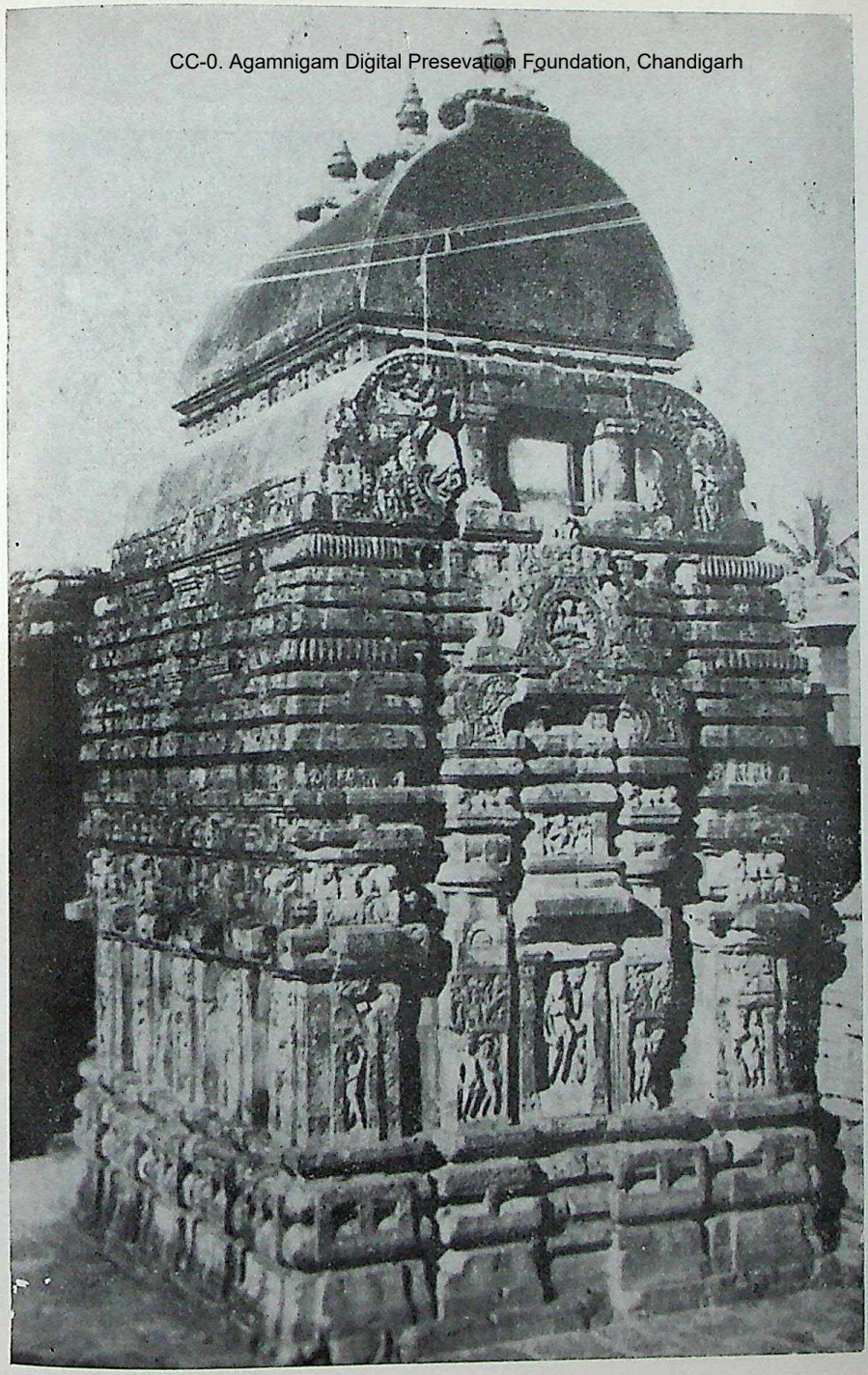

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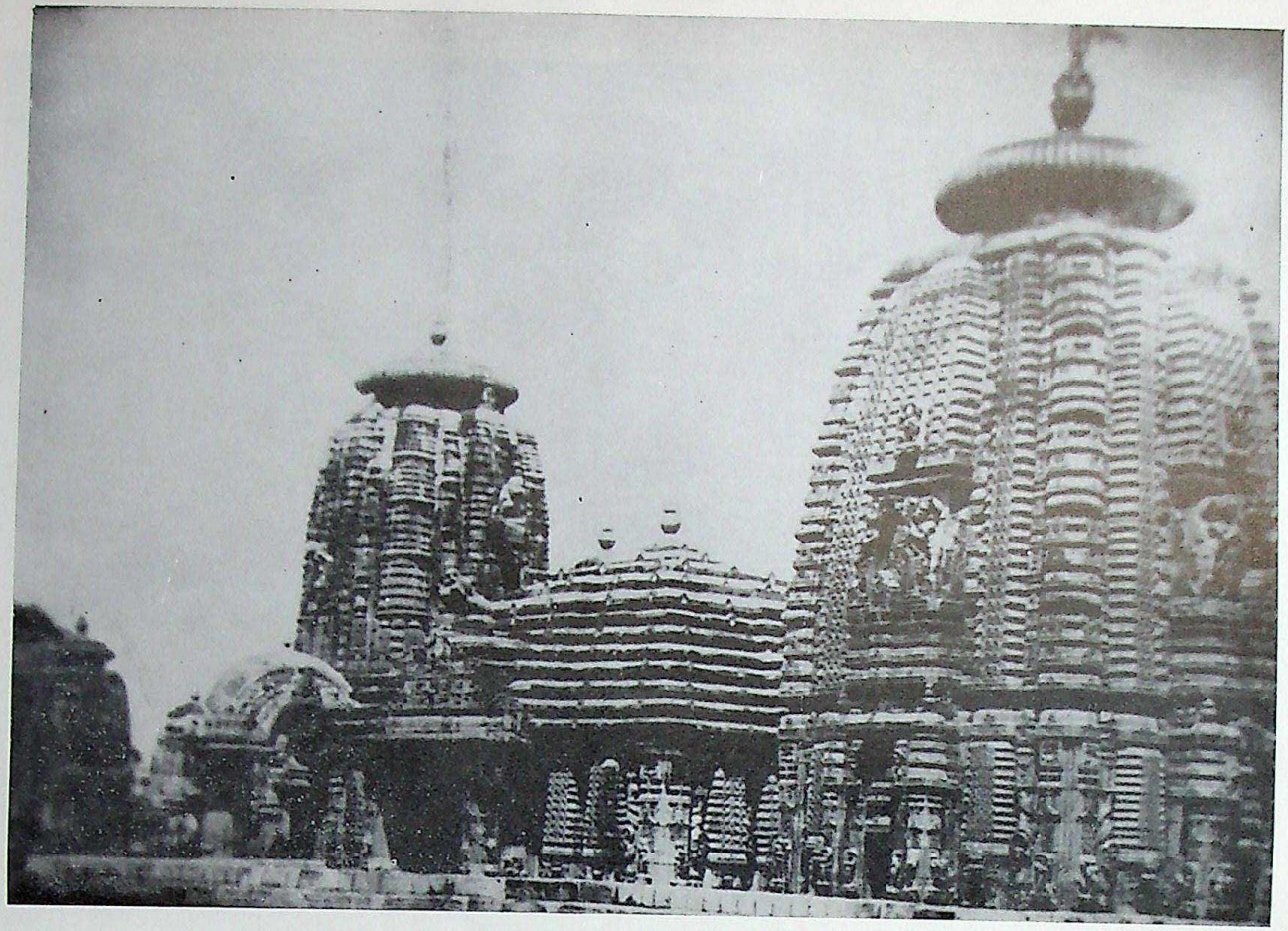

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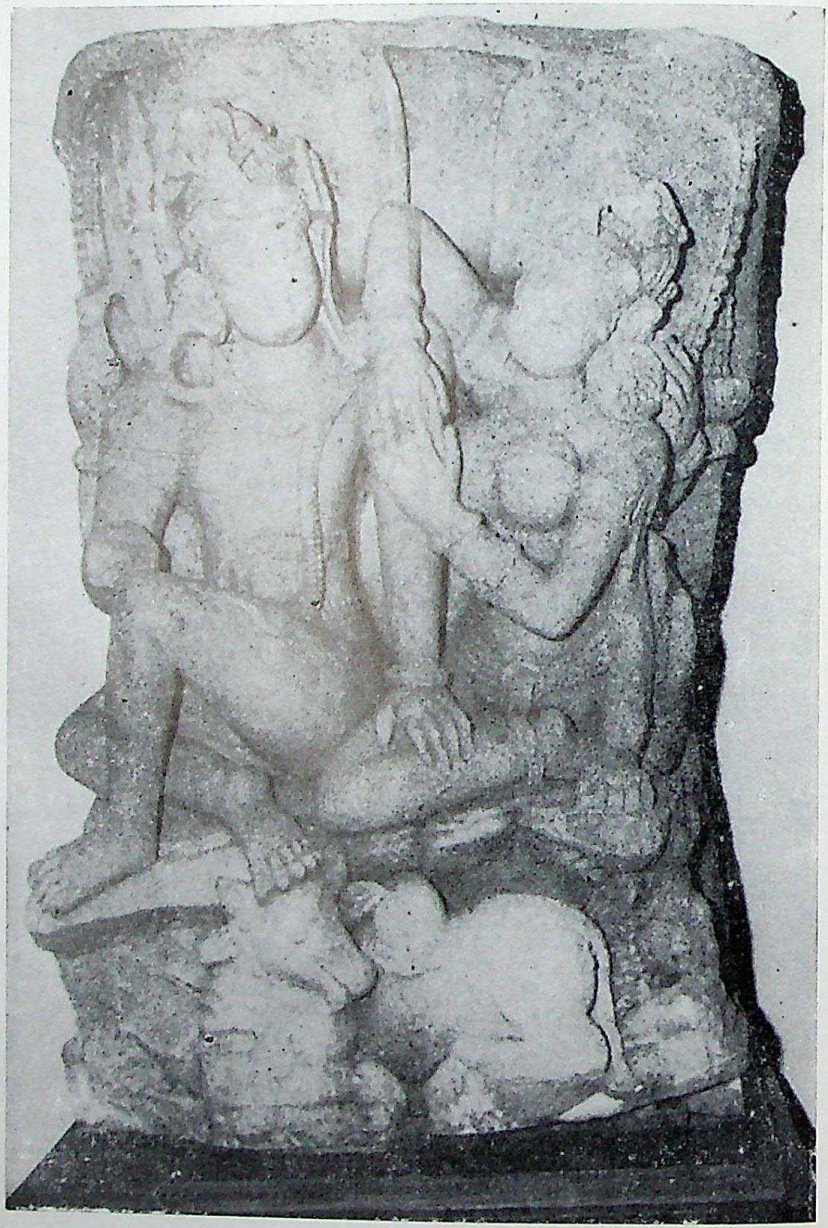

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THE PURĀṆAS: THEIR IMPORTANCE AS A SOURCE OF ANCIENT INDIAN POLITICAL HISTORY

Concept of History in Ancient Greece

In very few countries did the craft of investigating contemporary and past events grow and develop early. The dictum that barring blind natural forces 'nothing moves in this world which is not Greek in its origin' holds good for historical writings.

In the late 6th Century BC Hecateus, a traveller and native of Miletus, composed his *Genealogies*. As HE Barnes[1] points out, he 'foreshadowed two important developments of scientific historical method by setting up truth as the test of his statements and assuming a frankly critical attitude towards the conventional Greek creation of myth'.

By the 5th Century BC the Greeks had attained an amazing mastery in the art of writing history, contemporary as well as past. This was facilitated by the emergence of a group of prose writers called *Logographoi* in the 6th Century BC and the awakening of curiosity in the Greek mind for a scientific knowledge of history, ethnography and geography consequent upon their close contact with the Achemenian world which included the Hellenised states in Asia Minor.

Around 420 BC Herodotus, a native of Halicarnassus in Asia Minor, wrote his memorable *History* on Greco-Asiatic relations from the accession of Croesus of Lydia in 560 BC to the capture of Sestos in 478 BC. The history, aptly extolled by MI Finley[2] as a 'miracle of human enterprise', that this father of history and anthropology had composed on the basis of the three cardinal principles of (i) scepticism over superhuman and miraculous elements, (ii) *audialteram partem* and

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(iii) preference for autopsy and firsthand oral information over stories at secondhand, is also a universal history in the sense that it 'gathers the greater part of the known world into a narrative concentrated on a single issue', the Persian wars.

A significant step in advance over Herodotus was taken by a junior contemporary, the Athenian general and statesman Thucydides[3] (c 456-396 BC), who in a much narrower and restricted field like the Peloponnesian War (431-404 BC) has emphasised the importance of the accuracy of data, relevance and cogency of materials, mastery of details and 'their subordination to the forward movement of the whole narrative'.

Another outstanding Greek contributor to the advancement of historical science was Polybius (c 198-117 BC), who in his history of the rise of Rome and the constitutional development of the Roman Empire to 146 BC has displayed a high sense of impartiality, an awareness of the interdependence of geography, topography and history, a keen interest in the problem of causation, a staunch belief in the pragmative value of history and preference for a laboured and diffuse style to rhetoric.

Concept of History in Ancient Rome

The models the Greeks set up for historical writings were followed in Rome, where historical literature was first written in Greek and subsequently in Latin. Early Roman historians evinced more interest in perfecting style than in accuracy of statements, and were guided more by a patriotic ardour than an urge for *audialteram partem*. Further, they developed an abiding faith in the supernatural.

In the early years of the 1st Century AD, Titus Livius (59 BC-AD 17) composed a massive prose work on the growth of the Roman world-state, but his blind patriotism and national vanity, utter carelessness in the use of sources, inability to distinguish between fact and fable and preference for the style of the Greek rhetoricians have all combined to affix on his work the stamp of inferiority compared with Polybius' scientific history of Rome. Less careless and credulous than Livy was Publius Cornelius Tacitus (c AD 55-131) who reconstructed the history of Rome from the death of the Emperor Augustus

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down to the period of the Flavian emperors in his two classics, entitled the *Annals* and the *Histories*, besides composing a third classic styled *Germania* on the history of the early Germans. But the scientific merit of his works is greatly diminished by his bias against the 'empire' and his penchant for dramatic writing.[4]

Concept of History in Ancient China

As we turn to the East, leaving aside Europe, we find that the study of history is fairly old in China. The office of Shih,[5] archivist or historian, is almost as old as Chinese history. He was originally a semi-religious official, 'concerned with court ceremonies, sacrifices and great state affairs', but by the Chou period he became a keeper of 'detailed and day to day chronicles'.[6]

With the composition of *Shih chih*, historical memoirs, by the grand historian Ssū-ma Ch'ien around 100 BC a new era in Chinese historiography was inaugurated at the time of the Hans. One of the best travelled scholars of his day, Ssū-ma Ch'ien treated the entire past from the Yellow Emperor down to the T'ai-ch'u era in his universal history which is divided into 130 chapters. He was modest in evaluating his own work: 'My narrative consists of no more than a systematisation of the material that has been handed down to us. There is, therefore, no creation; only a faithful representation.'[7]

A critique, parts of which are quoted below, written by Pan Piao about a century and a half later, on the merit of Ssū-ma Ch'ien as a historian would show the degree of excellence China had attained in the craft of historical criticism by the middle of the 1st Century AD: 'The work of Ssū-ma Ch'ien is most valuable for the period from the origin of the Han up to the Emperor Wu, but as for the manner in which he has collected classical texts, reassembled commentaries on them and given extracts of the writings of a hundred schools, he is, in a very great number of cases, negligent and incomplete and does not give proper value to the original texts . . . Nevertheless, he exposes facts and their meaning; he is a clever writer without being florid; he is full of matter without being coarse; form and substance are in him in proper balance.

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These are the qualities of an excellent historian.[8]

Another court historian, Pan Ku, wrote under the later Hans a dynastic history called *History of the Former Han Dynasty*, and this Han work, along with *Shih chih*, became models for the later Chinese historians.[9]

Concept of History in Ancient India

At the time much headway was achieved in writing history[10] in countries like Greece, Rome and China, its study was in its infancy in India. The ancient Indians, though not to the extent of their contemporaries in these three countries, envinced interest in their ancestors and past. But for several centuries interest in the past was severely circumscribed by a mythic view of life and the cosmos and was totally bereft of the spirit of rational inquiry. Consequently, early Indian interest in the past did not develop into what may be called history.[11]

The protest voiced by Zenophanes of Colophon against myth and the supernatural in the late 6th and the early 5th Centuries BC was unheard of in ancient and early medieval India, and the models set up by Herodotus and enriched by Thucydides were still to be matched.

Semi-literate bards, called *sūtas* and *māgadhas*, from the most ancient days chose the heroic deeds of royal personages as theme of the ballads they used to recite to the accompaniment of the lute both in humble cottages and palaces to entertain the public, nobility as well as masses.

These ballads, called *gāthās* and *nārāsaṁsīs*, dealing with the deeds of kings and celebrated men, enjoyed wide popularity throughout India till about the 3rd-4th Centuries AD, when with the growing importance of neo-Brahmanical religions they came to be superseded by devotional or religious songs, for a livelihood the bards took to trade and management of horses and chariots.[12]

This does not mean that professional bards and genealogists disappeared completely. Centuries later they reappeared in Rajasthan and composed poetry and prose chronicles in Diṅgala (a form of archaic Rājasthānī) and Piṅgala (Brajabhāsā) to amuse their warlike patrons.[13]

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These *gāthās* and *nārāsaṁsīs* should not be confounded with history. Views on history have no doubt changed from age to age, and the scientific, humanistic, rational, self-revelatory and interpretative concept of history is doubtless the contribution of the 20th Century. But the original Greek word *istoria* or the Latin term *historia*, which means learning by inquiry or investigation, suggests that the desire for inquiry into the workings of the minds of kings and their ministers or of the people was recognised as the hallmark of historical writings long before the birth of Christ. But the *gāthās* and *nārāsaṁsīs*, ballads sung in praise of men, offer no parallel for the spirit of investigation so characteristic of history. They are not history but documents or pseudo-documents of history.

In later and post-Vedic literature[14] mention is made of a special branch of knowledge entitled *Itihāsa*.[15] The fact that stories like those of Devāpi and Śāntanu and of Viśvakarman and Bhauvan are so named, coupled with the root sense of the term, would imply that *Itihāsa* was originally understood to mean a past episode. But by the time of Kauṭilya[16] it acquired a wider connotation to embrace all possible areas of human interest, mundane and spiritual, real and imaginary, practical and speculative (*Paścimam-itihāsa-śravaṇe/ Purāṇam-itivṛttam-ākhyāyik-odāharaṇaṁ dharma-śāstram-arthaśāstram c-et-itihāsaḥ/*).

It is in this broader concept that the Mahābhārata merits the title *Itihāsa*. In this great epic one does not hear the voice of a Herodotus or a Thucydides but is treated instead to a chorus sung by a Homer and a Christ. The modern usage of the term *Itihāsa* as a synonym of history appears to be arbitrary, and even its standard definition as meaning past events, arranged in the form of stories and conveying instructions in the fourfold ultimate end of human beings, comprising *Dharma* or righteousness, *Artha* or wealth, *Kāma* or artistic and cultural life, and *Mokṣa* or self-emancipation[17] (*Dharm-ārtha-kāma-mokṣāṇām-upadeśa-samanvitaṁ/ Pūrva-vṛttaṁ kathā-yuktaṁ-itihāsaṁ pracakṣate//*) reveals that *Itihāsa* was more akin to religion and morality than history proper.

Likewise, the full characteristics and implications of history are seldom betrayed by such categories of literature as *Ākhyāyikā* (anecdotes and stories), *Itivṛtta* (occurrence or

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event) and *Udāharaṇa* (example) which were quite popular in ancient India from the days of Kauṭilya, if not earlier.

The Purāṇas,[18] which might have existed in their embryonic form at a fairly early date but have attained their present form between the 2nd and 6th Centuries AD, do not merit the title of history. The contents of the Purāṇas are wide and varied, extending over *smṛti*, philosophy, grammar, geography, architecture, stories and myths of a sectarian character, and the Purāṇas betray much that may be characterised as unhistorical and miraculous. The Paurāṇikas are more concerned with the hereafter than the world we live in and lead their readers from the *terra firma* of solid facts to an imaginary celestial world of eternal bliss.

In the Purāṇas fiction is confounded with fact, myths and legends with human experiences, and supernatural events with historical phenomena. The feeble voice of a historian is forcefully drowned by the dogmatic dicta of a religious *guru*.

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that the tradition of recording historical phenomena within the broad spectrum of time and space, having an end in itself, did not develop in ancient India. If history[19] is understood to mean a significant narrative of past events which aims not merely at discovering what happened but also at explaining it, throughout the entire period we hardly come across a text, barring *Rājataraṅgiṇī*[20] composed by a 12th Century Kashmiri chronicler which can be acclaimed a genuine historical text and classed in the same category as the works of Herodotus, Thucydides and Ssū-ma Ch'ien.[21]

The great dearth of true historical literature in ancient India has given rise to contrary theories about the Indian knowledge of history. Whereas scholars like SK De,[22] N Subrahmanyam[23] and AK Majumdar[24] contend that Indians lacked a correct appreciation of the true ideas and methods of history, RC Majumdar[25] is of the opinion that the ancient Hindus possessed a true historical sense endowed with the necessary qualities to produce good historical literature.

RC Majumdar's view about the 'high watermark of historical knowledge reached by the ancient Hindus' is primarily based on the evidence of *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, which though 'far inferior to three or four works of great genius occupies an

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honoured place among the historical works of ancient and medieval ages', but in view of the time and place *Rājatarangiṇī* was composed the influence of the Arab and Chinese historians upon Kalhaṇa cannot be ruled out, and accordingly, the evidence of this text may not reflect the historical concept and methodology of the Indian people of the earlier period.

Notwithstanding the forceful assertion of RC Majumdar to the contrary, the earlier period has not produced a text which satisfactorily fulfils the historian's[26] own definition of history as a 'true record of kings and historical events, arrived at by a correct appraisal of all available materials, and arranged in a chronological order, with a description of the social, political and economic conditions from age to age'.

Commenting on the nature of history, De[27] observes: 'Apart from a deep philosophy or artistic setting, ordinary history is in fact a prosaic idea. As a matter of research, it aims at knowledge of facts, as an idea, it professes to bring out larger principles, governing human affairs, as a method its leaning is towards objective accuracy.'

This spirit of rational inquiry into the workings of historical phenomena or the search for explanation and understanding about man himself, his sociopolitical relations and his past is something practically unheard of in the literature of the pre-Kalhaṇa period. Neither this literature nor contemporary inscriptions envisage a systematic attempt to question known facts, 'in particular about their meaning in rational, human terms'.

Causes of Absence of Historical Texts

Various suggestions have been advanced by scholars to explain why history, properly so-called, was not produced by the ancient Hindus. Thus lack of curiosity about secular affairs, the preponderant influence of fatalist doctrines, absence of a dynamic history, lack of a sense of homogeneity, poverty in scientific outlook and some other factors are said to account for the absence of historical texts in ancient India.

The fact that historical literature did not develop in ancient India was due not so much to an inherent weakness of the

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Indian mind as to the influence of a typical Hindu concept of life that places the ultimate reality and goal of life outside the pale of history, encompassing the mundane experiences of human beings. The protagonists and followers of *Māyā-Vāda* were hardly allured to write and preserve for posterity an account of unreal, transitory and temporal life, meriting the title of history, as in Greece, Rome and China in ancient times.

Another possible factor which may account for the absence of a real historical text in pre-Kalhaṇa India might have been the lack of interest of the Brahmin intelligentsia to engage in the tedious task of composing history in which politics plays a significant role.

Politics was the prerogative of the Kṣatriya caste and was forbidden to the Brāhmaṇas. Evidence exists of Brāhmaṇas wielding political power in ancient India, but it is conceivable that to a creative Brahmanical mind history, where accuracy predominates over imagination and fancy, and diligence over talent, proved to be less attractive than philosophy and literature, which provide ample scope for the display of creativity and merit.

A parallel instance of lack of interest explaining a historical phenomenon may be noticed in the ancient Greeks' predilection for monolingualism and refusal to learn a foreign language. 'The Greeks', Arnaldo Momigliano[28] writes, 'remained proudly monolingual as, with rare exceptions, they had been for centuries.' Whereas the Romans and the Jews mastered Greek, the Greeks did not evince interest in the study of Latin, Hebrew and Aramaic. This is indicative of one's attitude of mind but is seldom a reflection on one's competence.

Whatever the cause, the plain, unpalatable and unassailable truth is that the Hindus of pre-Kalhaṇa India did not produce a genuine historical text in any sense resembling the concept of history reflected in contemporary Greece, Rome and China. In this respect, the ancient Hindus stand parallel to the early Egyptians of the pre-Manetho epoch[29] who composed and preserved for centuries the Old Kingdom annals, Turin papyrus, New Kingdom annals, ornamental monuments, including the great pyramids and a large body of inscriptions.

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All were important as historical documents, but yet the Egyptians were loath to think 'in terms of cause and effect or of trends that were observable in their own story or in those of neighbouring peoples in the ancient world'.[30]

Early Group of Dynasties

Although the Purāṇas[31] do not merit the title of history their religious and cultural importance apart they are a valuable repository of information on the political history of ancient India up to the beginning of the Gupta rule in the early half of the 4th Century AD. The account, as found in the Purāṇas, is sketchy, fragmentary, disjointed and inadequate, and in many cases it stands dubious and uncorroborated. But a historian endeavouring to reconstruct the political history of ancient India cannot afford to pass over it in silence.

The Purāṇas[32] describe in some sections the history of the various royal families which are believed to have ruled over different parts of India from time immemorial. Chronologically, the dynasties which find mention in the Puranic texts may be arranged in three groups—early, intermediate and later.

The early group comprises the ruling houses which flourished up to the date of the battle of Bhārata,[33] the intermediate the dynasties which flourished and disappeared between the date of this battle and the foundation of the Maurya Empire by Candragupta,[34] and the third the later royal families up to the early 4th Century AD.

The early group is said to have included several royal families which are further subdivided into two races, solar and lunar, but all descending from the mythical King Manu Vaivasvata. The broad outlines of some leading dynasties of this group are:

1. The Aikṣvāku (also called Ikṣvāku and Aikṣvāka) dynasty of Ayodhyā. This dynasty was named after Manu's chief son Ikṣvāku, who was succeeded on the throne of Ayodhyā in Madhyadeśa by his son Vikukṣi Śaśāda. Besides the Purāṇas, the genealogy of this royal house is recounted in the Mahābhārata, Rāmāyaṇa and Kāḷidāsa's *Raghuvaṁśa*, although striking divergences are noticeable in their accounts.

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If credence is to be given to the Puranic genealogy, the dynasty must be supposed to have continued its existence for 95 generations up to the battle of Bhārata, when Bṛhadbala met his end at the hands of the Pāṇḍava Prince Abhimanyu. Among the outstanding monarchs of the family were Ikṣvāku, Māndhātṛ, Satyavrata Triśaṅku, Hariścandra, Sagara, Bhagīratha, Ambarīṣa, Kalmāṣapāda, Dilīpa II Khaṭvāṅga, Raghu, Daśaratha and Rāma.

2. The Vaideha dynasty. The dynasty, also designated Maithila after its second King Mithi, was founded by Ikṣvāku's son Nimi, also called Videha. The Purāṇas preserve for us a list of some 53 kings down to Kṛtakṣaṇa, the last known ruler of the house.

3. The Vaiśāla dynasty. The kings of the dynasty, descendants of Manu's son Nābhānediṣṭha, are said to have ruled over the region around modern Basarh in Bihar till the time of Pramati, also called Sumati who, as the Rāmāyaṇa testifies, was a contemporary of the Ikṣvāku monarch Daśaratha.

4. The Śāryāta dynasty. The dynasty which owes its descent to Manu's son Śaryāti appears to have wielded suzerainty in Gujarat, with Kuśasthalī or Dvāravatī as its capital, for a short period until it was overthrown by Puṇyajana Rākṣasa.

5. The Nābhāga dynasty. Descendants of Manu's son Nābhāga, the members of this family, who were five in number according to Puranic testimony, reigned over a locality which cannot be properly identified.

All the aforesaid dynasties are referred to as belonging to the solar race, being quite distinct from the following, said to be *aila* or lunar in descent.

1. The Kānyakubja dynasty. Its kings are represented as the scions of the family of Amāvasu, son of Purūrava, and only 15 of them find mention in the Puranic texts. The dynasty is stated to have risen into prominence in the reigns of Jahnu, Gādhi and Viśvāmitra.

2. The Kāśī dynasty. There are two contrary versions of the origin of this line, one deriving it from Āyu's son Kṣatravṛddha, and the other tracing descent to Suhotra Paurava. In the reign of the Pāṇḍavas the throne of Kāśī was held by Subāhu and Abhibhū, the latter succeeding the former.

3. The Haihaya dynasty, founded by Yadu's son Sahasra-

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jit, prospered in southern Malwa. With the passage of time the Haihayas grew in power and comprised five leading groups, comprising Vītihotras, Śāryātas, Bhojas, Avantis and Tuṇḍikeras and collectively called Tālajaṅghas, descendants of Talajaṅgha.

4. The Yādava dynasty, descended from Yadu's son Kroṣṭu, originally held sway over the ancient country of Vidarbha, watered by the rivers Carmaṇvatī (Chambal), Vetravatī (Betwa) and Śuktimatī (Ken). But in time it divided into several branches like the Kukuras, Andhakas and Vṛṣṇis.

5. The Turvaśu dynasty whose kings were the descendants of Yayāti's son Turvaśu and ruled the territory around Rewa in Madhya Pradesh. Marutta, an illustrious king of the family being childless, adopted Duṣyanta, a Paurava, as his son. Thus this line seems to have merged with the Paurava line. The Purāṇas say that the descendants of this branch founded the kingdoms of Pāṇḍya, Cola, Kerala and Kulya or Kola[35] in the south.

6. The Druhyu dynasty sprang from Druhyu, son of Yayāti, ruled the territory west of the Jumna and north of the Chambal. Later, the Druhyus retired to Gandhāra, in the Peshawar and Rawalpindi districts of modern Pakistan, and still later spread into the *mleccha* countries to the north beyond India and founded kingdoms there[36] (*Pracetasaḥ putra-śataṁ rājñaḥ sarva eva te| mleccha-rāṣṭr-ādhipāḥ sarve hyudīcīṁ diśam-āśritāḥ||*).

7. The Ānava dynasty owed its descent to Yayāti's son Anu, and in course of time divided into two branches, the Uśīnaras and the Titikṣus, which ruled over parts of Punjab and eastern Bihar respectively.

8. The Paurava dynasty, which is said to have sprung from Yayāti's son Puru, ruled the middle region with its headquarters first at Pratiṣṭhāna[37] and subsequently at Hastināpura.[38] It acquired Indiawide celebrity in the reigns of Duṣyanta, Bharata, Kuru, Pratīpa, Śāntanu, Dhṛtarāṣṭra and Yudhiṣṭhira. The main line of the Ailas survived through the Pauravas.

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Genuineness of the Puranic Genealogies

The question naturally arises how far the genealogies enumerated above are trustworthy. Scholars are divided in regard to the genuineness of the historical data supplied by the Puranic texts. Keith is somewhat sceptical about the historicity of the Puranic account and doubts the genuineness of any event not explicitly mentioned in Vedic literature.

On the other hand, scholars of FE Pargiter's reputation are inclined to regard the Puranic accounts as genuine and substantially trustworthy, since they are sometimes corroborated by other works. The genealogy of the Ikṣvāku kings of Ayodhyā is given for instance, besides the Purāṇas, in other works like the Rāmāyaṇa and *Raghuvaṁśa*.

While the Purāṇas vouchsafe the existence of two Dilīpas, one father of Bhagīratha, and the other father or grandfather of Raghu, the Rāmāyaṇa simply alludes to one Dilīpa. That one Dilīpa was the father of Bhagīratha seems to be fairly certain, as is testified by the Mahābhārata, while *Raghuvaṁśa* confirms the Purāṇas that 'Raghu was the son of a Dilīpa who was necessarily a second Dilīpa'.

Again, while narrating the genealogy from Raghu onwards to Rāma, the Purāṇas mention four kings, Raghu, Aja, Daśaratha and Rāma. The same version is repeated in *Raghuvaṁśa*, whereas the Rāmāyaṇa provides a list of 12 or 13 kings between Raghu and Rāma. Further, the Purāṇas represent Kakutstha as the son of Śaśāda and third king of the Ikṣvāku dynasty. This is, however, in contrast to the evidence of the Rāmāyaṇa, which refers to him as the son of Bhagīratha and grandson of Dilīpa.

It is interesting to note that the Mahābhārata and *Raghuvaṁśa* corroborate the Purāṇas by stating that Dilīpa was a descendant of Kakutstha. 'It thus appears', writes Pargiter,[39] 'that wherever it is possible to check the Rāmāyaṇa and Puranic lists of the Ayodhyā dynasty by other authorities, those authorities corroborate the Purāṇas and contradict the Rāmāyaṇa. Hence the Rāmāyaṇa genealogy must be put aside as erroneous, and the Puranic genealogy accepted.'

'If then the Puranic genealogy of Ayodhyā was held to be right', continues Pargiter,[40] 'in spite of the Rāmāyaṇa, there

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is strong evidence that it is ancient and trustworthy. It is reasonable to conclude that equal care has been bestowed on the other dynasties, and there is a strong presumption that they had been equally well preserved during the preceding centuries, that is, that they are the original genealogies and therefore genuine.'

Contrary Statements

Although these are cogent arguments to prove the authenticity of the Puranic accounts, there are strong reasons for the belief that the aforesaid genealogies are incomplete and occasionally inaccurate. A critical perusal reveals in them blemishes of various kinds like the occurrence of contrary statements and presence of uncorroborated elements.

First, the Purāṇas represent the Yādavas, Pauravas and Aikṣvākus of Ayodhyā as contemporaneous dynasties, 'all starting from Manu and all ending with the Bhārata battle'. Yet, while the Purāṇas furnish a list of some 93 kings of the Aikṣvākus for the period, they enumerate only 59 and 51 kings of the Yādavas and Pauravas respectively. The three lists cannot simultaneously be regarded as authentic, and once we accept the former to be genuine we must discard the other two as incomplete and erroneous.

Conversion of Epithets into Names

Secondly, occasions are not few and far between when a name is converted into an epithet or an epithet into a name. Dīrghabāhu and Raghu were two distinct kings of the Ikṣvāku dynasty of Ayodhyā, and yet in some of the Purāṇas Dīrghabāhu is indicated as an epithet of Raghu. Similarly, Kausalya Hiraṇyanābha was a king of Kosala but erroneously his epithet is used in some Puranic texts for another Kausalya who is said to have ruled after him.

Uncorroborated Statements

Thirdly, the Purāṇas allude to the invasion of Ayodhyā by the Haihayas in alliance with the Śakas, Yavanas, Kāmbo-

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jas, Paradas and Pahlavas from the northwest in the pre-Bhārata-war epoch, but the invasion of India by the Śakas and other foreign tribes at such an early date is contrary to our knowledge of Indian history. The Puranic texts inform us that Nimi was the founder of the Videhan dynasty.

This however contradicts the evidence of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* which seems to indicate that the Videhan kingdom was first established by Videgha Māthava, a migrant from the banks of the River Sarasvatī. The fact that Nimi cannot claim the distinction of founding the Videhan line of kings is further attested to by the *Majjhima Nikāya* and *Nimi Jātaka* which show that the name Nimi was borne not by the first but probably some later king or kings of the family.

Representation of Contemporaries as Successors

Fourthly, as will be discussed later at some length, the genealogies of the various dynasties of the post-Bhārata-war epoch are full of defects such as representation of contemporaries as successors, omission of certain individuals, and use of family designations in the sense of personal names. When the genealogy of later rulers is found defective and erroneous it is only natural to suppose that similar errors have crept into the Puranic enumeration of the early rulers of these dynasties.

Relative Chronology of Different Dynasties

The question which now confronts us relates to whether the foregoing dynasties were really contemporaneous, all terminating with the Bhārata battle, as the Purāṇas would make us believe. The paucity of materials does not enable us to study the problem in all its aspects, and it is not possible to determine with any amount of precision the chronological relations even among the three leading dynasties of Group A, comprising the Pauravas, Videhas and Ikṣvākus.

The *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*[41] seems to suggest that Janaka, the patron of Yājñavalkya, flourished at a later period than the Pārīkṣitas, sons of Parīkṣit, in the post-Bhārata-war period. Only two kings of the Videhan dynasty are

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known to have the name Janaka, one an early king, and the other the father of Sītā who was the illustrious Videhan contemporary of the Ikṣvāku King Daśaratha.

If we identify the Janaka of the Vedic text with the two known kings, the whole scheme of Puranic chronology of the dynasties of Group A becomes erroneous and the conclusion becomes inevitable that in respect of antiquity the Pauravas were anterior to the Videhas and Ikṣvākus, and that Rāma, the remote ancestor of Bṛhadbala, flourished after the Bhārata battle. But this does not seem to be the case as the Purāṇas emphatically declare Bṛhadbala of the Ikṣvāku dynasty a contemporary of Abhimanyu, the predecessor of Parīkṣit.

The identification of the Vedic Janaka with either Janaka I or Janaka II is unconvincing in view of the fact that Janaka is a dynastic designation, and consequently he may be identified with a later member of the dynasty which probably maintained its existence even in the post-Bhārata-war epoch, as the Ikṣvāku line did.

In his *Political History of Ancient India* (pp 48 ff), HC Raychaudhuri has attempted to establish that Janaka was separated by five or six generations, or 150 to 180 years from Janamejaya and by an interval of two centuries from Parīkṣit. He observes: 'If, following a Puranic tradition, we place Parīkṣit in the 14th Century BC, we must place Janaka in the 12th Century BC. If, on the other hand, we accept a date for Guṇākhya Śāṅkhāyana, the pupil's pupil of Uddālaka . . . in the 6th Century BC, we must place Parīkṣit in the 9th Century BC and Janaka in the 7th Century BC.' But unless the position of Janaka is clearly ascertained in the genealogy of the Videhan dynasty, as has not been done by the learned scholar, this chronological scheme does not offer any substantial assistance to us in the troubled sea of Indian chronology.

Chronological Problem

The Puranic list of kings of the pre-Bhārata-war era is likewise susceptible to pose a serious chronological problem in the sense that the ancestry in all cases is traced to the mythical King Manu Vaivasvata without any semblance of an attempt at dating the foundation of the kingdoms, and

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when implicit or general statements are relied upon as the basis of a chronological scheme we are at once led to an absurd proposition.

As mentioned earlier, according to the Puranic tradition 95 generations of kings had intervened between Manu Vaivasvata and the Bhārata War. If c 1400 BC is accepted as the provisional date for the great battle, and 18 years be taken as the average regnal period for each generation of kings, we arrive at 3110 BC as the date of Manu.

This date will however have to be lowered 450 years if FE Pargiter's view dating the Bhārata War to around 950 BC is endorsed. AD Pusalkar has found no reason to disparage the authenticity of the Puranic tradition, and relying on the assumption that the great flood recorded in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and other texts occurred about 3100 BC, he arrives at 3102 BC as the age of the first traditional king in India, Manu Vaivasvata.

Pusalkar's[42] scheme of the chronology of early Indian history would be as follows:

1. Pre-flood tradition and the dawn of history.
2. The great flood and Manu Vaivasvata (c 3100 BC).
3. The Yayāti period (c 3000-2750 BC).
4. The Māndhātṛ period (c 2750-2550 BC).
5. The Paraśūrāma epoch (c 2550-2350 BC).
6. The Rāma era (c 2350-1750 BC).
7. The Kṛṣṇa period (c 1950-1400 BC).
8. The Bhārata War (c 1400 BC).

Notwithstanding Pusalkar's assertion to the contrary, the above chronology, based on the Puranic tradition, does not appear to be tenable, for if the Aryan affiliation of the dynasties is conceded, and this seems to be the case, there is hardly any scope for pushing the date before the middle[43] or the very beginning[44] of the 2nd Millennium BC, but in neither case is the time-span adequate for accommodating the long list of successive rulers.

The great antiquity of the Aryan kingdoms in the north-western plains and the upper Ganges-Jumna Doab, as vouchsafed by the Puranic account, is hardly substantiated by the

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evidence of excavated materials at different sites in the area.

Painted greyware, usually associated with the Vedic Aryans (although the association is highly provisional and based on circumstantial evidence), appeared in the Ghaggar Valley[45] at a date round about 1200 BC. Such ware has been recovered from Period II at Rupar,[46] assigned to a date between 1000 BC and 700 BC.

The earliest cultural period at Taxila,[47] the capital of eastern Gandhāra, represented by three successive city sites, Bhir Mound, Sirkap and Sirsukh, cannot be traced earlier than 600 BC. Kurukṣetra,[48] now represented by Amin, Thanesar, Pehoa and Rājā Karṇa Kā Qila, all on or near the River Sarsuti, has not yielded encouraging materials, save a few coins of the 2nd or 3rd Century AD.

Hastināpura,[49] in Meerut district, has yielded painted greyware from levels which are assigned to the period extending from the beginning of the 11th Century BC to the beginning of the 8th Century BC. Ahicchatra,[50] the reputed capital of North Pañcāla, now identified with Ramnagar and the adjacent area in Bareilly district, does not claim any trace of structural remains of a date anterior to 300 BC.

Strata VIII and VII of the site,[51] containing the remains of kuccha houses, are dated 300 to 200 BC and 200 to 100 BC respectively. At Kauśāmbī,[52] painted greyware occurs two structural periods after the original construction of the defences, supposed to be built from 1500 to 1100 BC.

Excavations carried out at Vaiśālī, Mithilā, Girivraja and Ayodhyā,[53] all situated in present-day Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, have revealed that 'these cities were founded before the 6th Century BC and, according to a few C-14 dates, their earliest existence might be placed around 1000 BC.' At Atranjikhera[54] the PGW levels go to a slightly earlier date, but a post-800 BC context is suggested for the greyware both at Alamgirpur and Śrāvastī.[55]

More Arguments Stressing the Unreliability of the Puranic Account

There are good reasons for the belief that the Aryans came into contact with South India not much earlier than the 6th

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Century BC, but the Purāṇas would create the impression that the whole of South India, including Sri Lanka, had become Aryanised in the Tretā era which is supposed to have lasted from c 2350 to 1950 BC.

Finally, as AK Majumdar[56] points out, 'If the testimony of the Purāṇas can be shown to be wrong about events which happened in the 8th to 7th Century BC, how can we place any reliance in their uncorroborated testimony about events which happened according to them in 3000 BC?'

The foregoing discussions would clearly reveal that the account of the royal families of the pre-Bhārata War period, as given in the Purāṇas, has sometimes strong claims to acceptance. But such occasions are far from numerous, and generally the Puranic account, particularly with regard to the number of kings of different dynasties and order of succession of rulers, does not seem authentic.

In some instances the Puranic account is corroborated by other sources. While it is admitted that corroboration from an extraneous source is a proof of reliability, it is at the same time difficult to overlook the fact that the sources with which we are concerned are not contemporaneous with the supposed events they describe. It is not altogether unlikely that they derived their information from the same source as the Puranic compilers. Highlighting the merit of the Puranic evidence Pusalkar[57] once observed: 'Priority of date and comparative freedom from textual corruption are doubtless two strong points in favour of Vedic texts. The evidence of the Purāṇas, on the other hand, cannot be ruled out altogether because, despite a good deal of what is untrustworthy in them, they alone contain something like a continuous historical narrative, and it is absurd to suppose that the elaborate royal genealogies were all merely figments of imagination or a tissue of falsehood.'[58] But the task of finding out where imagination or falsehood terminates and reality sets in has still to be accomplished.

Intermediate Group of Royal Families

Leaving aside the dynasties of the early group, we may now turn to the intermediate group which are known to have comprised the following:

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1. The later Paurava dynasty, whose genealogy starts from Parīkṣit, son of Abhimanyu, and ends with Nirāmitra Kṣemaka, with 23 kings intervening. The Purāṇas state that in the reign of Nicakṣu[59] the city of Hastināpura was carried away by the Ganges, whereupon the Paurava king moved his seat of government to Kauśāmbī.

2. The later Ikṣvāku dynasty descended from Bṛhatkṣaya, successor of Bṛhabdala and terminated with Sumitra, son of Suratha. It is said to have comprised 30 kings in all, among whom are included Śākya, Suddhodana, Siddhārtha and Rāhula.

3. The Bārhadratha dynasty of Magadha is said to have owed its descent to Bṛhadratha, who flourished before the Bhārata War. The genealogy of this line of kings in the postwar epoch begins with Somādhi. Sixteen kings are said to have been born in this royal family which ruled for 723 years. It is worth noticing that from the Bārhadrathas onwards the Purāṇas[60] mention, in most instances, how long individual monarchs mentioned by them ruled.

4. The Pradyota dynasty. As the Purāṇas[61] mention, the Bārhadrathas, Vītihotras and Avantis having passed away, Pulika founded the Pradyota dynasty by anointing his son Pradyota by force. Pālaka, Viśākhayūpa, Ajaka and Nandivardhana ruled in succession and the dynasty lasted 52 years (or 138 years according to some Purāṇas).

5. The Śaiśunāga dynasty. The Purāṇas inform us that the Pradyota dynasty was overthrown by Śiśunāga, founder of the Śaiśunāga dynasty. The family, to which is assigned 360 (or 163) years of rule, is said to have endured for ten generations. The kings who ruled in succession were Śiśunāga, Kākavarṇa, Kṣemadharman, Kṣatraujas, Bimbisāra, Ajātaśatru, Darśaka, Udāyin, Nandivardhana and Mahānandin.

6. Early contemporary dynasties. In this category are included 24 Aikṣvākus, 27 Pañcālas, 24 kings of Kāśī, 28 Haihayas, 32 Kaliṅgas, 25 Aśmakas, 36 Kurus, 28 Maithilas, 23 Śūrasenas and 20 Vītihotras. All these dynasties flourished till they were exterminated by Mahāpadma, the celebrated founder of the Nanda dynasty.

7. The Nanda dynasty. The dynasty owes its descent to Mahāpadma,[62] the destroyer of all the Kṣatriyas (*Sarva-kṣatr-*

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āntaka) and sole monarch (*ekarāṭ*) of the earth, which was under his undisputed sway. After a prolonged reign of 88 years he is said to have been followed by his eight sons in succession. His successors, among whom only Sukalpa is mentioned, enjoyed the earth for a period of 12 years, after which the dynasty was uprooted by the Brahmin Kauṭilya. The Nanda kingdom dwindled and the Maurya Empire was founded.

Corroboration from other Sources

It seems that the Puranic account of the foregoing royal families is trustworthy to a considerable degree as we find it corroborated by contemporary or nearly contemporary sources. The Mahābhārata, the Atharvaveda Saṁhitā as well as the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* allude to the existence of a Paurava king named Parīkṣit and the prosperity of his kingdom.

The reference to Janamejaya as a Pārīkṣita in the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* proves beyond doubt the authenticity of the Puranic statment that the former was born of the latter. The Puranic statement as regards Janamejaya's performance of a couple of horse sacrifices and his dispute with the Brāhmaṇas is strikingly confirmed by the evidence of Brāhmaṇa literature.

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* refers to one of the *aśvamedha* sacrifices presided over by Indrota Daivāpi Śaunaka whereas the *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* mentions one in which Tura Kāvaṣeya officiated as the priest. As Raychaudhuri[63] observes: 'We have here probably the germ of the Puranic stories about Janamejaya's dispute with the Brāhmaṇas. Vaiśāmpāyana, who headed the opponents of Janamejaya, undoubtedly belonged to the Kāśyapa clan.'

That Janamejaya was involved in animosity with the Brāhmaṇas is further corroborated by the *Arthaśāstra*.[64] Among the princes of the later Ikṣvāku dynasty of Kosala Prasenajit and Suddhodana are mentioned in several Buddhist texts. Ripuñjaya or Ariñjaya, the last of the Bārhadratha dynasty, may be regarded as being identical with King Arindama of the Pāli texts.

Among the kings of the Śaiśunāga dynasty, Śiśunāga, Bimbisāra, Ajātaśatru, Darśaka, Udāyin and Kākavarṇa are

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known to us from other sources also. King Pālaka of the Pradyota dynasty is likewise alluded to in Jain accounts. Similarly, many genuine historical traditions are noticeable in the Puranic account of the Nanda dynasty of Magadha.

Moreover, the Puranic testimony that King Udāyin of Magadha founded the city of Kusumapura in the fourth year of his reign is confirmed by the Jain tradition as recorded in the Pariśiṣṭaparvan which informs us that he built on the bank of the Ganges a new metropolis which came to be known as Pāṭaliputra.

Archeology sometimes corroborates Puranic statements. The Puranic version of a flood in the city of Hastināpura in the reign of King Nicakṣu is affirmed by archeologists who have traced the signs of this flood in the form of an erosional scar on a mound at Hastināpura belonging approximately to the beginning of the 8th Century BC.[65]

The Puranic statement that the city lay desolate consequent upon this physical calamity is also strikingly confirmed by a gap of two centuries between the second and third occupational periods at Hastināpura.[66]

The Puranic account of the conquest of Mahāpadma Nanda is corroborated at least partly by evidence like the Hathigumpha inscription which alludes to the conquest of Kaliṅga by either Mahāpadma or one of his successors, the existence of a place called Nander on the Godavari, presupposing the victory over the Aśmakas of the area, some 13th Century Mysore inscriptions that bear witness to the extension of the Nanda paramountcy to Kuntala in Karnataka and Andhra, and the edicts of Aśoka, being the proofs of the southern expansion of the Magadhan Empire up to Kurnool and Chitaldoorg districts in Andhra Pradesh.

Omissions in the Puranic Account

When we turn to other aspects of the Puranic account of these dynasties we are amazed to see how so many glaring omissions, uncorroborated traditions and contradictory statements characterise it. We first propose to point out some of them. The Purāṇas furnish us with an exhaustive list of the later Paurava kings, and yet strangely do not notice the

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Ābhipratāriṇas (Ābhipratāriṇa Kākṣaseni, Vṛddhadyumna) whose existence is testified by Brāhmaṇa literature.[67]

The Purāṇas are silent about the illustrious Kosalan monarch Mahākosala whom we know from the Buddhist texts to have ruled in the 6th Century BC.

Jātaka sources mention the Kuru Kings Dhanañjaya Koravya, Sutasoma and the like who are passed over in silence by the Purāṇas, although there may be some doubt about their historical existence in the absence of further corroborative evidence. The Purāṇas refer to the eight successors of Mahāpadma, and yet they specify the name of only one ruler. The lacuna is probably filled by the *Mahabodhivaṁśa*,[68] which preserves the list of eight kings who ruled in succession after the death of the first Nanda.

Uncorroborated Statements

The Purāṇas sometimes make statements the corroboration of which is wanting from any other source hitherto discovered. The Puranic chroniclers, for instance, represent the Kosalan monarch Prasenajit as the son and successor of Rāhula and grandson of Siddhārtha, identified with the Buddha. But this is untenable in view of the fact that Prasenajit and the Buddha were contemporaries, both of the same age but belonging to two distinct branches of the Ikṣvāku line.

Tibetan sources describe him as the son of Brahmadatta. This shows that the Purāṇas sometimes erroneously regard contemporaries as successors and collaterals as lineal descendants. It is further interesting to note that the Puranic list of the Ikṣvākus of Kosala includes 'Śākya, the designation of a clan, and Siddhārtha (Buddha) who never ruled at all.' Similarly, the Puranic statement that Śiśunāga was a predecessor of Bimbisāra and founder of his family appears inconclusive.

Aśvaghoṣa refers in *Buddhacarita* to Bimbisāra as a scion of the Haryaṅka dynasty, while the Buddhist *Mahāvaṁśa* represents Śiśunāga as founder of a separate family of rulers which is said to have followed that of Bimbisāra.

The Purāṇas relate that Śiśunāga usurped the glory of the Pradyotas, implying thereby that he was later than the

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first Pradyota, whom we know from other evidence to have been a contemporary of Bimbisāra and his son Ajātaśatru. This and other considerations[69] would clearly reveal that Śiśunāga flourished long after Bimbisāra.

Again, the Purāṇas regard Darśaka as the immediate successor of Ajātaśatru on the throne of Magadha, but this contradicts the Buddhist and Jain traditions which represent Udāyibhadda or Udāyin as son and successor of Ajātaśatru. Lastly, the Puranic account of the Śaiśunāga ancestry of the Nanda line of kings is at variance with the barber pedigree of Mahāpadma as recorded in the Jain tradition[70] which, being strikingly confirmed by the classical account, appears to be more reliable.

Contrary Statements

The importance of the Purāṇas is considerably diminished by the fact that the Purāṇas are definitely known to have recorded contradictory statements quite frequently. Thus while the number of the Bārhadrathas of Magadha is given in some texts as 16, it is mentioned in others as 22 or 32, and the period of their rule, as recorded in them, would vary from 723 to 1000 years.

A similar discrepancy in the statements of the Puranic compilers is detected by Raychaudhuri who observes: 'Thus (a) Pradyota is said to have been anointed when the Vītihotras had passed away, (b) Śiśunāga destroyed the prestige of the Pradyotas and became king, and yet (c) contemporaneously with the Śaiśunāga kings 20 Vītihotras (and other lines) are said to have endured at the same time.'[71]

Moreover, as regards the regnal duration of Mahāpadma, the Puranic texts appear to record two divergent traditions, the *Matsya* assigning 88 years, and the *Vāyu* 28 years. As a further case of glaring contradiction in the Puranic statements may be cited the following verse, quoted by Pargiter at page 58 in his *Dynasties of the Kali Age*:

Mahāpadm-ābhiṣekāt tu yāvaj-janma Parīkṣitaḥ/
evaṁ varṣa-sahasraṁ tu jñeyaṁ pañcāśad-uttaraṁ//

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This verse places the birth of Parīkṣit 1500 years before Mahāpadma, founder of the Nanda dynasty of Magadha, in contradistinction to some *Bhāgavata* manuscripts which read *śataṁ pañca-daś-ottaraṁ*, restricting the gap between Mahāpadma and Parīkṣit to 1015 years. The problem is further complicated by a *Matsya* manuscript which reads *śatatrayaṁ*, as well as by the occurrence of variant readings, suggesting an interval of 1050 or 1115 years.

Later Group of Dynasties

As mentioned earlier, the third group of Puranic dynasties comprises the royal families which are said to have flourished after the decline of the Nanda power. Some of the leading dynasties of this group are enumerated below.

1. The Maurya dynasty, the founder of which, Candragupta, was installed on the throne of Magadha by Kauṭilya.[72] The kings of the family who ruled in succession were Candragupta, Bindusāra, Aśoka, Kunāla, Bandhupālita, Daśana, Daśaratha, Samprati, Śāliśūka, Devadharma, Śatadhanvan and Bṛhadratha. They were destined to hold sovereignty for 137 years until they were supplanted by the Śuṅgas.

2. The Śuṅga dynasty, the earliest king of which was Puṣyamitra. He is said to have usurped the throne of Magadha after having uprooted the last Maurya king Bṛhadratha.[73] The kings who followed him were Agnimitra, Vasumitra, Andhraka, Pulindaka, Ghoṣa, Vajramitra, Bhāgavata and Devabhūmi. The dynasty lasted 112 years, whereupon power passed into the hands of the Kāṇvas.

3. The Kāṇvāyana or Śuṅga-bhṛtya dynasty was descended from the Brahmin minister Vasudeva, who overthrew the last Śuṅga king. The Purāṇas assign to the four-generation rule of the Kāṇvas represented besides Vasudeva by Bhūmimitra, Nārāyaṇa and Suśarman, a period of 45 years, till it was overthrown by Simuka, the first ruler of the Andhra dynasty.

4. The Andhra dynasty owed its descent to Simuka, who is said to have secured power after assailing Suśarman, last of the Kāṇvāyanas, and the remains of Śuṅga power.[74] Some Purāṇas give us the number of these kings as 30 and the total duration of their rule as 460 years. Among the re-

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nowned monarchs of this dynasty were Śrī Śātakarṇi, Hāla, Sundara Śātakarṇi, Gautamīputra, Pulomā and Yajñaśrī Śātakarṇi.

5. The Nāga dynasty of Vidiśā, to which belonged Seṣa Nāgarāja, Bhogin, Rāmacandra or Sadācandra, Candrāṁśa, Dhanadharman or Dharmavarman, Vaṅgara and Bhūtinanda.

6. The Vindhyaka dynasty founded by Vindhyaśakti, who is represented in the Purāṇas as having succeeded the Kilakila kings. He was succeeded by his son Pravīra who celebrated the *vājapeya* sacrifice. He was followed by his four sons.

7. The Nāga kings of Padmāvatī. Most of the manuscripts of the *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas* read *nava Nākāstu bhokṣyanti puriṁ Campāvatiṁ*. There is little room for doubt that *Nākās* is a mistake for Nāgas and that the expression *nava* means nine, although KP Jayaswal interprets the term in the sense of new. A manuscript of the *Vāyu Purāṇa* reads *Padmāvatiṁ* in place of *Campāvatiṁ*, and this reading is confirmed by the *Viṣṇu Puārṇa* which associates the Nāgas with Padmāvatī (*Nava Nāgāḥ Padmāvatyāṁ*). It is unfortunate that the Purāṇas do not record the names of the Nāga kings who ruled at Padmāvatī.

8. The Nāga kings of Mathura, whose names are not specified but whose number is given as seven in the *Vāyu* and *Brahmāṇḍa Purāṇas* (*nṛpāḥ Mathurāṁ ca puriṁ ramyāṁ Nāgā bhokṣyanti sapta vai*).

9. The Gupta dynasty. The Purāṇas are silent about the names of the kings of this dynasty, merely saying that they ruled over territories comprising Prayāga on the Ganges, Sāketa and Magadha.[75]

10. The kings of the family of Maṇidhānya are represented in the Purāṇas as powerful monarchs who succeeded in establishing their political hegemony over the Naiṣadhas, Yadukas, Śaiśītas and Kālatoyakas.

11. The Devarakṣita dynasty is said to have brought under its sway a vast dominion embracing Kosala, Andhra, Puṇḍra, Tāmralipta and the coastal tract along the Bay of Bengal, with their metropolis probably the city of Campā.

12. The Purāṇas mention some other dynasties, including (i) the seven Andhras or Andhra-bhṛtyas of Śrīparvata (52 years), (ii) ten Ābhīras (67 years), (iii) seven Gardabhins

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(72 years), (iv) 18 Śakas (183 years), (v) eight Yavanas (87 years), (vi) 14 Tuṣāras (107 years), (vii) 13 Muruṇḍas (206 years), (viii) 11 Maunas (103 years), (ix) Kilakila kings, (x) three Bāhlikas, (xi) 13 Puṣyamitras and Paṭumitras, (xii) seven kings of the Mekala region, (xiii) nine Megha kings of Kosala, and (xiv) King Viśvaphāṇi of Magadha.

Contradictory Statements

The Puranic account of the later group of royal families may be said to suffer from three main defects—discrepant statements, uncorroborated traditions, and misplacement of the order of kings.

How contradictory statements of the Purāṇas are, may however be illustrated best with a reference to their narrative of the Maurya kings of Magadha. Thus the number of kings of the dynasty is given differently in different texts. *Matsya* says ten but names only seven, a manuscript of *Vāyu* says nine but gives 12, the *Brahmāṇḍa* as well as a different manuscript of *Vāyu* say nine and mention as many, *Bhaviṣya* says ten but gives only nine and *Viṣṇu* says ten and gives ten.

All the Purāṇas agree in their statement that the Mauryas ruled 137 years, but the individual regnal periods put together are 160 years in a *Vāyu* manuscript and 133 years in *Brahmāṇḍa* and another *Vāyu* manuscript. Similarly, the duration of the Śuṅga dynasty is said to be 112 years in the Purāṇas, but this is incompatible with the aggregate of reigns, which is 118 years.

Likewise, as regards the number and duration of rule of what they style Andhras or Andhra-bhṛtyas, who were the same as the Śātavāhanas, the Purāṇas record conflicting traditions. According to one school there were 17, 18 or 19 kings whose rule lasted some three centuries or a little less.

According to another tradition, there were as many as 30 kings, the length of whose reigns covered more than four centuries. Some scholars are however of the opinion that both traditions, as recorded in the Purāṇas, are trustworthy, the former referring to the main line and the latter to the different branches of the family. Again, whereas the Purāṇas declare that after Mahāpadma kings would be of Śūdra origin, they

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themselves contradict this when in their account of the Kāṇvāyanas they describe them as Brahmins.

Uncorroborated Statements

The Purāṇas sometimes make statements not corroborated by other evidence. According to them, Gautamīputra ruled 21 years, but this is contrary to the epigraphic evidence which clearly establishes that the Śātavāhana monarch ruled at least up to his 24th regnal year.

Pulumāvi III, known from the Purāṇas to have ruled seven years, may be supposed to have been in power for at least one more year, if the evidence of the Myakadoni inscription, dated in his 8th regnal year, is taken into consideration.

The Puranic statement about the downfall of the Kāṇvāyana kingdom at the hands of the Śātavāhana King Simuka is hardly compatible with the testimony of inscriptions and coins, not a single specimen of which has so far been discovered from any place in Magadha where the descendants of Vāsudeva ruled, and neither Simuka nor any of the Śātavāhana kings ever claimed overlordship of Magadha.[76]

The Purāṇas preserve an account of the Devarakṣita dynasty, but in the absence of any corroborative evidence either from coins or inscriptions it is very difficult to ascertain how far the account is reliable. Some Indologists have attempted to prove the existence of this dynasty by assigning to it King Candra of the Mehrauli iron pillar inscription,[77] or by locating it in the territory of ancient Devarāṣṭra, identified with either Maharashtra or a place in Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh, but in the absence of corroborative evidence these theories can at best be treated as speculative.

It is further interesting to note that the Puranic statement about the kingdom of the early Gupta kings, which included Prayāga on the Ganges, Sāketa and Magadha, is not supported by the Chinese tradition, as recorded by I-tsing,[78] who seems to include in it a considerable portion of Varendrī in North Bengal.

Distortion of Order of Succession

Instances of the inversion of the order of kings, which are

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so numerous in the Puranic genealogical account of the two preceding groups of dynasties, are however rare in the case of the later group of kings. The Purāṇas, for instance, place King Āpilaka early in the list of Śātavāhana kings, but if any credence is to be assigned to the numismatic considerations,[79] he is to be placed along with the later rulers of the dynasty.

Genuine Historical Traditions

But in spite of these errors of omission and commission the Purāṇas seem to have preserved many genuine historical traditions. The Puranic version of the annihilation of the last Maurya King Bṛhadratha by Puṣyamitra Śuṅga and the subsequent foundation of the Śuṅga authority is affirmed by the writer of *Harṣacarita*.[80] We learn from the Purāṇas that the Nāgas established their rule at Vidiśā, modern Besnagar near Bhilsa, Padmāvatī,[81] modern Padam Pawaya in the erstwhile Gwalior state of Madhya Pradesh, Mathurā and Kāntipura, which has been identified by KP Jayaswal with Kantit between Mirzapur and Vindhyachal, but located more properly at Kutwal or Kutwar in Morena district, Madhya Pradesh.

The existence of several Nāga principalities, as alluded to in the Purāṇas, is strikingly attested by Samudragupta's Allahabad *praśasti* which mentions Nāgadatta, Nāgasena, Gaṇapatināga and Nandi, all Nāga princes, among the kings of Āryāvarta slain by the Indian Napoleon. Several Nāga coins have been discovered from places like Kutwar, Narwar[82] and Padam Pawaya in Morena, Shivpuri and Gwalior districts of Madhya Pradesh and Mathura[83] in Uttar Pradesh.

Padam Pawaya has yielded the largest number of such coins, including those of Devanāga, Bhīmanāga, Bṛhaspatināga, Gaṇapatināga, Skandanāga, Vasunāga, Vyāghranāga, Prabhākaranāga, Bhavanāga, Ravināga, Vibhunāga and Vṛṣabha. The Purāṇas mention a tribe called the Puṣyamitras, occupying the region near the source of the Nerbudda river. That a tribe of this name existed is proved by the testimony of the Bhitari pillar inscription[84] of Skandagupta which refers to an unsuccessful encounter of this tribe with the imperial Gupta authority. Mention is made of a *Puṣyamitrakula* in the Jain *Kalpasūtra*.

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The Purāṇas occasionally throw remarkable light on the vexed question of chronology of several ancient Indian dynasties. All of them unanimously declare that the Andhra Simuka, having assailed the last Kāṇvāyana monarch Suśarman and destroyed the remains of Śuṅga power, would obtain possession of the earth.

If this statement is to be relied upon, it is almost certain that Simuka was for some years a contemporary of the last of the Kāṇvāyanas. This would enable us to suggest for Simuka, as well as for the foundation of the Śātavāhana power, a date in the middle of the lst Century BC [324 BC (date of Candragupta's accession)+137 years (period of the Mauryas)+112 (rule of the Śuṅgas)+45 (period of the Kāṇvas)=30 BC].

This conclusion, based on Puranic evidence, about the date of the foundation of the Śātavāhana power seems to agree with the archeological evidence, which likewise suggests for the event a date around the middle of the lst Century BC. The coins of the early Śātavāhana rulers like Śrī Śātakarṇi and Śātavāhana are encountered in Period IV at Nevasa in Ahmadnagar district of Maharashtra, dated between the early 2nd Century BC and the beginning of the Christian era,[85] or between the late lst Century BC or the early 1st Century AD and the early 2nd Century AD.[86]

Finds of Period V, designated Roman or Late Early Historical and placed between the lst Century BC and the 3rd Century AD[87] or between the 2nd and 5th Centuries AD,[88] include coins of the later Śātavāhana Kings Gautamīputra Śātakarṇi and Śrī Yajña Śātakarṇi. The discovery of early Śātavāhana coins from Period IV at Nevasa may be treated as convincing proof of the theory that the Śātavāhanas rose to power around the middle of the lst Century BC.

Concluding Remarks

The foregoing survey makes it abundantly clear that notwithstanding defects, gaps and errors of various kinds the Purāṇas, when properly collated and carefully compared with other sources, non-Puranic literary and archeological, yield information which, though fragmentary, incomplete and disjointed, is historically important.

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Herein lies the importance of the Puranic texts as historical documents of the early history of India. But the Purāṇas do not have a claim to be history nor do they intend to write history. 'The four characteristics of history', writes RG Collingwood,[89] 'were (a) that it is scientific, or begins by asking questions, whereas the writer of legends begins by knowing something and tells what he knows; (b) that it is humanistic, or asks questions about things done by men at determinate times in the past; (c) that it is rational, or bases the answers it gives on appeal to evidence; (d) that it is self-revelatory, or exists in order to tell man what man is by telling him what man has done.'

There is little room for doubt that these characteristics of history are seldom betrayed by the Purāṇas, although they are clearly exhibited in much earlier works composed in other parts of the world.

Evaluating the authenticity of the Vedic tradition Pargiter[90] once remarked, '. . . ancient Indian history has been fashioned out of compositions which are purely religious and priestly, which notoriously do not deal with history, and which totally lack the historical sense. The extraordinary nature of such history may be perceived if it were suggested that European history should be constructed merely out of theological literature. What would raise a smile if applied to Europe has been soberly accepted when applied to India.'

This remark, as AK Majumdar[91] aptly points out, seems more applicable to the Purāṇas than to the Vedas.

REFERENCES

1. *A History of Historical Writing* (New York, 1963), p 27.
2. *The Greek Historians* (New York, 1971), p 5.
3. JB Bury (*The Ancient Greek Historians* (New York, 1909, p 147) points out that the work of Thucydides 'marks the longest and most decisive step that has ever been taken by a single man towards making history what it is today.'
4. HE Barnes, *op cit*, p 38.
5. The term *shih* has several meanings—(i) writings about the past, (ii) one who records events, and (iii) astrologer or astronomer (David L Sills,

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International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, Vol 6, p 401). Burton Watson (*Ssū-Ma Ch'ien Grand Historian of China* (New York, 1958, p 70) interprets the term in the sense of an historian.

6. Burton Watson, *op cit*, p 71.
7. L Carrington Goodrich, *A Short History of the Chinese People* (London, 1957), p 52.
8. L Carrington Goodrich, *op cit*, p 53.
9. For Chinese historiography see CS Gardner, *Chinese Traditional Historiography* (1938); K Scott Latourette, *The Chinese: Their History and Culture* (New York, 1946); Creel Herrlee Glessner, *The Birth of China* (New York, 1937).
10. The term has threefold meaning—(i)the entire human past as it actually happened, (ii) man's attempt to describe and interpret the past, and (iii) use of history as a discipline.
11. This is not to say that legendary elements, theocratic or mythical, are entirely absent from historical works composed in these countries. Even the works of Herodotus and Thucydides are not wholly free from such blemishes. The following citation from RG Collingwood (*The Idea of History*, London, 1961, p 18) is worth considering: 'But what is remarkable about the Greeks was not the fact that their historical thought combined a certain residue of elements which we should call non-historical but the fact that side by side with these it contained elements of what we call history.'
12. In *Manu-saṁhitā* (X, 11-12) the Sūtas and Māgadhas are branded low castes, born of Kṣatriya or Vaiśya fathers and Brāhmaṇa mothers and classed with the despised Caṇḍālas (*Kṣatriyād-vipra-kanyāyāṁ sūto bhavati jātitaḥ| vaiśyān-māgadhavaidehau rāja-vipr-āṅganāsatau|| Śūdrād-āyogavaḥ kṣattā caṇḍālaś-c-ādhamo nṛṇāṁ| vaiśyarājanyaviprāsu jāyante varṇasaṁkarāḥ||*).
13. JN Sarkar, *History of History Writing in Medieval India* (Calcutta, 1977), p 2.
14. *Itihāsa* finds mention in the *Nirukta* by Yāska, who, to judge from linguistic grounds, might have belonged to an earlier period than Pāṇini (B Bhattacharya, *Yāska's Nirukta*, Calcutta, 1958, p 61). Goldstucker is in favour of the view that Yāska came after Pāṇini.
15. *Itihāsa* (*iti ha āsa*) etymologically means 'so indeed it was'. Monier-Williams (*A Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, Delhi, 1899, p 165) interprets it as 'talk, legend, history, traditional account of former events and heroic history.'
16. *Arthaśāstra* I, V, 14.
17. VS Apte, *The Student's Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Delhi, 1965), p 94.
18. The term *purāṇa* has a twofold meaning—(i) 'that which has lived from ancient times' and (ii) 'a work containing records of past events'.
19. WH Walsh, *An Introduction to Philosophy of History* (London, 1963), p 32. WH Walsh also defines history as a 'plain narrative of past events' when the historian confines himself to an exact description of what hap-

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pened (ibid). A similar concept of history has been advanced by JB Bury (*The Ancient Greek Historians*, New York, 1909, p 107) when he says: 'The historian has to do more than chronicle events. It is his business to show why things happened and to discover the forces which are at work.' RG Collingwood (*The Idea of History*, London, 1961, p 9) has defined history as the 'science of *res gestae*, the attempt to answer questions about human actions done in the past.'

20. *Rājataraṅgiṇī*, which was composed by Kalhaṇa in AD 1149-50 on the basis of ordinances (*śāsana*) of former kings, laudatory inscriptions (*praśasti-paṭṭa*) and records, oral as well as written (*śāstra*), is a historical text of no mean quality. Advocating an objective approach of history, Kalhaṇa comments that a historian, in recounting past events, is to assume the role of a judge who views things with a detached mind and is free from bias and prejudices. The high sense of historical acumen, which Kalhaṇa emphasises, is unfortunately missing in the earlier part of the work, which reads like fiction.

21. The statement of Megasthenes that a list of Indian kings from Bacchus onwards to Alexander was presented to the Greek invader while he was in India may be adduced as evidence in support of the existence of historical texts in India even by the 4th or 3rd Century BC. But documents should not be confounded with history and archivists are seldom historians. Supposing that the statement of Megasthenes was genuine, there is hardly any possibility to ascertain whether the list was true, particularly in respect of chronology. Chronology is the bedrock of history and Indian disinterest in this essential aspect of history is amply borne out by what Alberuni has said: 'Unfortunately, the Hindus do not pay much attention to the historical order of things, they are very careless in relating the chronological succession of their kings, and when they are pressed for information and are at a loss, not knowing what to say, they invariably take to tale-telling.'

22. *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (Calcutta, 1947), Vol I, pp 345 ff.

23. *Historiography* (Madurai, 1973), pp 327 ff.

24. *The Concise History of Ancient India* (New Delhi, 1977), Vol I.

25. CH Philips, *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* (London, 1961), p 25.

26. Ibid, p 15.

27. *A History of Sanskrit Literature* (Calcutta, 1947), Vol I, p 347.

28. *Essays in Ancient and Modern Historiography* (Oxford, 1977), pp 9 ff.

29. The priest Manetho composed in Greek the history of Egypt in the 3rd Century BC under Ptolemy II. It deals with the early history of Egypt down to the time of Alexander the Great in the late 4th Century BC.

30. Robert C Dentan, *The Idea of History in the Ancient Near East* (London, 1955), p 32.

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31. The Puranic literature seems to be traceable to great antiquity, being mentioned in such early texts as the *Atharvaveda* (XI, 7, 24; XV, 6, 4), *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇo* (XI, 1, 6, 9), *Śaṅkhāyana Gṛhyasūtra* (I, 22, 11), *Āśvalāyana Gṛhyasūtra* (I, 14, 6) and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (VII, 1, 2). The *Āpastamba Dharmasūtra* quotes verses from the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa*, implying thereby that the Purāṇas had become authoritative texts by the 5th or 4th Century BC, a conclusion which is also supported by the *Gautama Dharmasūtra* (VIII, 6; XI, 19) which mentions the Purāṇas as an authority for the regulation of conduct. The extant Purāṇas do not however claim to be very old and may be said to have attained their present form between the 2nd and 6th Centuries AD, although induction of new verses continued for several centuries after the 6th Century AD. The extant Purāṇas, which are 18 in number, comprise Brahma, Padma, Viṣṇu, Bhāgavata, Nāradīya, Mārkaṇḍeya, Agni, Bhaviṣya, Brahmavaivarta, Liṅga, Varāha, Skanda, Vāmana, Kūrma, Matsya, Garuḍa and Brahmāṇḍa. Besides these principal Purāṇas, as many as 100 minor Purāṇas or Upa Purāṇas have been traced. The 18 Purāṇas mentioned by Alberuni are Ādi, Matsya, Kūrma, Varāha, Narasiṁha, Vāmana, Vāyu, Nanda, Skanda, Āditya, Soma, Sāmba, Brahmāṇḍa, Mārkaṇḍeya, Tarkṣya, Viṣṇu, Brahma and Bhaviṣya.

32. According to the traditional definition, as given by the 5th Century lexicographer Amara, genealogies and deeds of kings and sages constitute two important topics of the Purāṇas, the remaining three being the original creation, dissolution and recreation and the ages of the Manus (cf. *Sargaś-ca prati-sargaś-ca vaṁśo Manv-antarāṇi ca| vaṁś-ānucaritam c-aiva Purāṇam pañcalakṣaṇaṁ||*). True to this tradition, most of the Purāṇas, except the late Varāha, Vāmana, Skanda, Nāradīya and Brahmavaivarta, deal with these themes.

33. The date of the Bhārata battle is a subject of keen controversy among scholars. Pargiter (*Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, p 182) assigns it to c 950 BC; KP Jayaswal, c 1424 BC; Sen Gupta (*Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Vol IV, pp 39 ff), c 2449 BC; AS Altekar (presidential address to the Archaic Section of the Indian History Congress, Proceedings of the Third Session, 1939, pp 68 ff), c 1400 BC and HC Raychaudhuri (*Political History of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1953, p 36), c 9th Century BC.

34. Candragupta Maurya's accession to the throne of Pāṭaliputra is generally dated 324 BC but according to RK Mookerji (*A Comprehensive History of India*, Calcutta, 1957, Vol II, p 5) the event occurred a year later.

35. FE Pargiter, *op cit*, p 108. According to him this is not improbable.

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36. Ibid.
37. Pratiṣṭhāna has been identified with Pihan, a village in the neighbourhood of modern Allahabad (Jaya Chandra Vidyalankar, *Bhāratīya Itihāsa Ki Rūparekhā*, Vol I, pp 126-9). This place was evidently quite different from Pratiṣṭhāna, modern Paithan which was the reputed capital of the Śātavāhanas.
38. The city, which lay along the Ganges (*anu-Gaṅgaṁ Hastināpuraṁ*), has been located in Meerut district, Uttar Pradesh. Excavations in 1950-52 revealed five occupational periods at Hastināpura, the earliest of which, Period I, characterised by the occurrence of ochre-coloured ware, is believed to have started before the middle of the 2nd Millennium BC. Period II is caracterised by the presence of painted greyware, houses made of mud or mud-bricks, copper as chief metal and the use of iron slag, the last item occurring in the latest levels of the period. Period III at Hastināpura, which lasted between the early 6th Century BC and the first half of the 3rd Century BC, is marked by the use of northern black polished ware, houses made of mud-bricks as well as burnt bricks, copper and iron and the introduction of coinage, made of copper and silver (*Ancient India*, No 9, pp 93 ff). BB Lal (ibid, p 93) has associated the painted greyware industry with the Aryans and the ochre-coloured ware industry with the earlier inhabitants of the Ganges Valley whom the Aryans encountered on their arrival there.
39. FE Pargiter, *op cit*, p 93.
40. Ibid, p 121.
41. Bhujju Lahyāyani tested Yājñavalkya with the question *Kva Pārīkṣitā abhavan*, whereupon Yājñavalkya replied: 'Thither where the performers of horse sacrifice abide.' From this it is concluded that the Pārīkṣitas must have passed away by the time of Janaka (HC Raychaudhuri, *Political History of Ancient India*, Calcutta, 1953, p 49).
42. *The Vedic Age* (Bombay, 1951), pp 273-74.
43. The date of the Aryan migration to India is generally fixed at the middle of the 2nd Millennium BC.
44. Carbon 14 datings reveal that the Harappan culture flourished till 1750 BC and if the theory of M Wheeler, GF Dales, Stuart Piggott and others, suggesting the contemporaneity of the later Harappans with the early Aryan migrants, be accepted, or if the Aryan affiliation of the Harappan cemetery R-37, Cemetery H and the Shahi Tump cemetery people of about 1800 BC is endorsed, the date of the Aryan entrance into India has to be pushed towards the early years of the 2nd Millennium BC but both suppositions are open to criticism.
45. *Ancient India*, No 9, p 97.
46. Ibid, p 124.
47. Ibid, p 132.
48. Ibid, p 150.
49. Ibid, p 95.
50. Ibid, No 1, p 40.
51. Ibid.

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52. GR Sharma, *The Excavations at Kauśāmbī* (Allahabad, 1960), pp 6-7. Painted greyware has also been discovered at Panipat, Purana Qila in Delhi, Tilpat, Katla Nihang and Mathura besides numerous other places (*Ancient India*, No 9, pp 141-42).
53. *Purātattva*, No I (1967-68), p 1.
54. Ibid, p 55.
55. Ibid, p 56.
56. *The Concise History of Ancient India* (New Delhi, 1977), p 88.
57. *The Vedic Age*, pp 304-05.
58. According to Pargiter, the foregoing dynasties may racially be divided into three physical types, Aryan, represented by Ailas or Kṣatriyas, Dravidian, comprising Mānavas, and the Munda, represented by Saudyumnas. Pargiter further believes that Ailas or Āryas entered India from the mid-Himalayan region and not from the northwest as is generally believed. But the theories of Pargiter about the racial affiliation of the different groups of kings and the Aryan entry into India are open to criticism. For criticism of Pargiter's theory, see *The Prāchī*, Vol II (1932), Parts III-IV, pp 22 ff.
59. *Gaṅgayā apahṛte tasmin nagare Nāgas-āhvaye| tyaktvā Nicakṣurnagaraṁ Kauśāmbyāṁ sa nivatsyati||* When the city of Nāgasāhvaya is carried away by the Ganges, Nicakṣu will abandon it and will dwell in Kauśāmbī (FE Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p 5). Kauśāmbī is identified with Kosam near Allahabad.
60. In the case of the Vītihotras, Kaliṅgas, Aśmakas, the Purāṇas do not notice their individual rulers but describe them in the shortest possible space.
61. *Bṛhadratheṣv-atīteṣu Vītihotreṣv-Āvantiṣu Pulikaḥ svāminaṁ hatvā sva-putram-abhiṣekṣyati|| miṣatāṁ kṣatriyāṇāṁ ca||* When the Bṛhadrathas, Vītihotras and Avantis have passed away, Pulika (*Vāyu*, Munika; *Viṣṇu*, Sunika; *Brahmāṇḍa* and *Bhāgavata*, Śaunaka) will kill his master and anoint his own son Pradyota by force in the sight of the Kṣatriyas (FE Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p 18).
62. *Mahānandi-sutaś-c-āpi śūdrāyāṁ kalik-āṁśajaḥ| utpatsyate Mahāpadmaḥs arva-kṣatrāntako nṛpaḥ||* FE Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p 25.
63. HC Raychaudhuri, *op cit*, p 39.
64. The *Arthaśāstra* says: *Kopāj-Janamejayo Brāhmaṇeṣu vikrāntaḥ.*
65. *Ancient India*, No 9, p 95.
66. Ibid.
67. The *Pañcaviṁśa Brāhmaṇa*, *Jaiminīya Upaniṣad Brāhmaṇa* and *Chāndogya Upaniṣad* mention a king of the family named Abhipratārin, son of Kakṣasena. According to HC Raychaudhuri Abhipratārin was Janamejaya's nephew (*op cit*, p 44). The *Aitareya Brāhmaṇa* and *Śāṅkhāyana Śrauta Sūtra* (XV, 16, 10-13) mention a king named Bṛddhadyumna, the son of Abhipratārin. The *Aitareya Brāhmana* possibly mentions his son Rathagṛtsa (Trivedi's translation, pp 322-23).
68. The text gives the following names: Paṇḍuka, Paṇḍugati

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ānaka, Daśasiddhaka, Kaivarta and Dhana. The last of them is generally identified with Agrammes or Xandrames of the classical texts.

69. HC Raychaudhuri, in his *Political History of Ancient India*, pp 155 ff, has made a detailed study of the problem and established beyond doubt that Śiśunāga came after Bimbisāra and Ajātaśatru.
70. According to the Purāṇas, Mahāpadma was the son of the last Śaiśunāga king by a Śūdra mother. The Jain tradition, on the other hand, represents him as the son of a courtesan by a barber. The classical writers also allude to the barber ancestry of the Nandas, though there is a minor discrepancy between the two accounts. Thus while the Jain account regards Mahāpadma as the son of a barber, in the classical account Mahāpadma (the father of Agrammes) is described as a barber, who, with the help of the queen of the last king of the preceding line, usurped the supreme authority.
71. HC Raychaudhuri, *op cit*, p 116.
72. *Candraguptaṁ nṛpaṁ rājye Koṭilyaḥ sthāpayiṣyati*/ FE Pargiter, *Dynasties of the Kali Age*, p 28.
73. *Puṣyamitras-tu senānīr-uddhṛtya sa Bṛhadrathaṁ*/ FE Pargiter, *op cit*, p 31.
74. *Kaṇvāyanam-ath-oddhṛtya Suśarmāṇaṁ prasahya taṁ Śuṅgānāṁ c-āpi yac-chiṣṭaṁ*/ *kṣapayitvā balaṁ tadā Sindhuko hy-Āndhra-jātīyaḥ prāpsyat-īmāṁ vasundharāṁ*// FE Pargiter, *op*
75. *Anu-Gaṅgā Prayāgaṁ-ca Sāketaṁ Magadhāṁs-tathā*/ *etān janapadān sarvān bhokṣyante Gupta-vaṁśajāḥ*// FE Pargiter, *op cit*, p 53.
76. Jagannath (*A Comprehensive History of India*, Calcutta, 1957, p 104) doubts the Puranic version, representing Simuka and Suśarman as contemporaries. But he accepts the Puranic statement about the Andhra conquest of Magadha, a view that does not sound convincing.
77. BC Sen, *Some Historical Aspects of the Inscriptions of Bengal* (Calcutta, 1942), p 207.
78. I-tsing (Chavannes, *Religieux Eminents* (*I-tsing*), pp 82-83; Beal, *Life*, XXXVI) tells us that *Mahārāja* Śrī Gupta (i.e., *Mahārāja* Gupta of the Gupta dynasty) 'built a temple for the Chinese priests and granted 24 villages as an endowment for its maintenance. This temple, known as the 'Temple of China', was situated close to a sanctuary called Mi-li-kia-si-kia-po-no, which was about 40 *yojanas* to the east of Nalanda, following the course of the Ganges.' Scholars are now generally of the opinion that according to the distance and direction given by I-tsing, the temple must have been situated in Bengal (RC Majumdar, *History of Bengal*, Dacca, 1943, Vol I, p 69). This evidently shows that the early dominions of the Guptas included at least parts of Bengal.
79. The coin bears the figure of an elephant with a legend giving the king's name in Brāhmī on

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the obverse, the reverse being blank. KN Dikshit (*Advance*, March 10, 1935, p 9) opines that on numismatic grounds the place of this ruler is more with the later kings of the dynasty than with the earlier ones, as indicated in the Purāṇas. See HC Raychaudhuri, *op cit*, p 409.

80. Bāṇabhaṭṭa in his *Harṣacarita* gives us the following details about the incident: 'While reviewing the army, under the pretext of showing him his forces, the base-born (*anārya*) general Puṣyamitra crushed his master, Bṛhadratha, the Maurya, who was weak in keeping his coronation oath' (*Indian Antiquary*, Vol II, p 363).
81. This is the usually accepted view. There are also views locating the place with Padmapura in Berar and Narwar in Shivpuri district, Madhya Pradesh.
82. Narwar has yielded the coins of eight Nāga kings, comprising Bhīmanāga, Bṛhaspatināga, Devanāga, Gaṇapatināga, Skandanāga, Vasunāga, Vyāghranāga and Prabhākaranāga.
83. Bela Lahiri, *Indigenous States of Northern India* (Calcutta, 1974), p 307.
84. The Bhitari inscription of Skandagupta relates that the Puṣyamitras, who had great resources in men and money, attacked the Gupta kingdom (*sam-udita-bala-koṣān-Puṣyamitrāṁś-ca*). Divekar (*Annals of the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute*, Poona, Vol I, pp 99 ff), a staunch critic of the above reading, suggests that the expression should be read as *yuddhy-amitrāṁś-ca*.
85. HD Sankalia, SB Deo, ZD Ansari and Sophie Ehrhardt, *From History to Pre-History at Nevasa* (Poona, 1960), pp 67, 69-70.
86. Ajay Mitra Sastri edited, *Coinage of the Śātavāhanas and Coins from Excavations* (Nagpur, 1972), p 106.
87. HD Sankalia, SB Deo, ZD Ansari and Sophie Ehrhardt, *op cit*, pp 67, 69-70.
88. AM Sastri, *op cit*, p 106.
89. *The Idea of History* (London, 1970), p 18.
90. *Ancient Indian Historical Tradition*, Preface, p v.
91. *Op cit*, p 89.

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ARCHEOLOGY AS A SOURCE OF 'MEDIEVAL' ORISSAN HISTORY

Introduction

In a country like India where there is hardly any regular historical chronicle to serve as a guide, the task of reconstructing the history and culture of ancient and 'early medieval' India with a tolerable degree of precision has been rendered possible mainly by what we may describe as archeological source materials which can be subdivided into three categories such as inscriptions, monuments and sculptures, and coins.

This observation justifiably applies to Orissa and to the other Indian states with undoubtedly the solitary exception of Jammu and Kashmir, where was composed around the middle of the 12th Century AD an outstanding chronicle styled *River of Kings*.

Inscriptions

Inscriptions on stones and copper plates issued in medieval Orissa by kings, subordinate rulers and their officers of different ranks, as well as by those who may be termed private individuals, far exceed in number those discovered in the corresponding period in any other Indian state, with the exception of the southerly states of Tamil Nadu and Karnatak, which have yielded the largest number of such epigraphic records.

Whereas the official inscriptions of this period are usually classified under such heads as eulogies commemorating the achievements of kings, grants in favour of learned Brahmins, religious institutions, deserving individuals and officials, and

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miscellaneous, private records engraved on the temples of Bhubaneswar, Srikurman, Simhachalam and other centres of pilgrimage and discovered at various other places were mainly dedicatory in nature, recording either religious donations in favour of institutions or individuals or the installation of images of gods and goddesses for worship.

The peculiarity of Orissan inscriptions lies not only in their largeness of numbers but also in the variety of languages, contents and scripts found in them.

Language and Script in Orissan Inscriptions

The Bhauma Kara kings, who founded their kingdom on the Orissan coast around the middle of the 8th Century AD[1] or later, as upheld by DC Sircar[2] and the present author,[3] issued inscriptions in Sanskrit, a practice likewise adopted by the early Gaṅga kings of Kaliṅganagara from about the beginning of the 6th Century AD onwards. Sanskrit inscriptions continued to be issued by the kings of some minor dynasties like the Bhañjas of Khiñjali and Khijjiṅga, the Śulkis of Kodālaka *maṇḍala*, the Tuṅgas of Yamagarta *maṇḍala* and the Nandas of Airāvaṭṭa *maṇḍala*, as well as by the Somavaṁśīs and the Imperial Gaṅga rulers, although some of these kings[4] from about the 13th Century AD onwards evinced their genuine interest in the issue of Oriya inscriptions as well.

Sometimes bilingual inscriptions were issued, showing the simultaneous use of Sanskrit and Oriya, as was the case with the Puri plates[5] of Narasiṁha IV (c AD 1378-1402), written partly in Sanskrit and partly in Oriya, and of the use of Tamil and Oriya, manifest in the Bhubaneswar inscription[6] of the time of the same Gaṅga King Narasiṁha IV.

The same practice was continued by the Gajapati kings in whose reigns, inscriptions wholly either in Sanskrit or in Oriya, like the Balasore copper axe-head inscription[7] of Puruṣottama, or partly in Sanskrit and partly in Oriya, or partly in Sanskrit, partly in Oriya and partly in Telugu, like the Veligalaṇi grant[8] of Kapileśvara (c AD 1436-1466), were issued.

Sanskrit inscriptions were first written in the well-known derivatives of Brāhmī like the Siddhamātṛkā, Kuṭila and Proto-Bengali scripts and subsequently in the Oriya alphabet,

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but Oriya epigraphs, which were first written in the Proto-Bengali alphabet, gradually came to show the use of the Oriya alphabet in most cases and of Telugu characters in others. With the passage of time, the use of the Oriya language and script in inscriptions gained momentum and the popularity of Sanskrit, which was universally adopted throughout Orissa as the vehicle of expression in both private and official documents for centuries, waned steadily.[9]

At no later period however was Sanskrit completely discarded in Orissan inscriptions, and the two Themra (in Sambalpur district) copper plate grants of Jayanta Simha[10] and his chief queen Rājyeśvarī Ratnakumārī[11] stand as specific examples of the continuance of Sanskrit as late as the 18th and 19th Centuries AD.

Importance of Inscriptions

The importance of these inscriptions as a source of information for reconstructing 'medieval' Orissan history is easily conceivable when it is borne in mind that in the case of 'medieval' Orissa we hardly come across a regular historical chronicle of the type of Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarangiṇī*. Indeed, inscriptions constitute a unique storehouse of information regarding the political and various facets of the cultural life of the people of Orissa throughout the whole of the ancient and 'medieval' period.

Importance for Political History

The importance of inscriptions for the study of the political history of 'medieval' Orissa may best be illustrated with the help of copper plate grants issued by kings and reigning queens of the Bhauma Kara ruling house of Guhadevapāṭaka or Guheśvarapāṭaka in or around Jajpur in Cuttack district. No less than 18 members of this royal family are known to us at present, yet strangely enough, they seldom find mention in extant literary works, indigenous as well as foreign.

Inscriptions have rescued their names from the limbo of oblivion, and they have provided us with richness of detail about the activities of these royal personages in politics and

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cultural pursuits, besides enabling us to arrange their reigns in proper chronological sequence.

The case of Queen Tribhuvanamahādevī I Sindagaurī may be cited in this connection. This queen, passed over in silence in literary documents, is represented in her Dhenkanal plate,[12] issued in the Bhauma era 120, as having assumed the reins of government of the Bhauma Kara kingdom in imitation of Gosvāminī of ancient times at the pursuance of her feudatories.

According to one of the Talcher grants[13] issued by a later king of the family, she subsequently abdicated in favour of her grandson Śāntikara II *alias* Gayāḍa II or Loṇabhāra (Lavaṇabhāra) when the latter grew up.

Thus a combined study of the Talcher and Dhenkanal copper plate grants would unmistakably vouchsafe some interesting but otherwise unknown episodes of the political life of 'medieval' Orissa like the assumption of rulership by a queen, active involvement of the feudatories in court-politics, and abdication of the throne by a ruler in favour of a descendant on the latter's attaining maturity.

The Vizag inscription[14] of AD 1081 places the accession of the Imperial Gaṅga King Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga in Śaka 999, which corresponds with AD 1078 whereas a votive record[15] from Mukhalingam refers to him as a reigning suzerain in Śaka 1069 or AD 1147. Thus a combined study of the aforesaid Vizag and Mukhalingam inscriptions would reveal interesting information as regards the duration of the rule of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga. Without citing further illustrations, it may reasonably be contended that had inscriptions been not available to serve as our guides dark patches would have eclipsed the spectrum of the political history of 'medieval' Orissa.

Importance for Administrative History

Glimpses of the political and administrative structure of the 'medieval' Orissan kingdoms, including those of the Bhauma Karas, Somavaṁśīs, Imperial Gaṅgas and Gajapatis are scattered in inscriptions. These records invariably refer to the king as the lynchpin of the state and fountainhead, at least theoretically, of all powers, executive, judicial, revenue

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and military, proving thereby the prevalence of monarchy as the normal and sole form of government in the period of our investigation.

The evidence of inscriptions in this respect may be treated as positive, for neither in the contemporary indigenous literature nor in the accounts of foreign travellers does one come across the faintest indication in favour of the existence of a nonmonarchical form of government in any part of Orissa in the corresponding period. The references to such technical terms as *mahā-maṇḍala, maṇḍala, viṣaya, bhukti, bhoga, rāṣṭra, pañcāḷi, pāṭaka, grāma, mantrī, amātya, sandhivigrahika, viṣaya-*

TABLE 1

A List of Territorial or Administrative Units as Mentioned in Orissan Inscriptions

Designation	Description
1. *Mahā-maṇḍala*	1. unit of a group of provinces or districts
2. *Maṇḍala*	2. kingdom, province or district
3. *Daṇḍapāṭa*	3. province
4. *Bhukti*	4. division, district or a group of districts
5. *Viṣaya*	5. district
6. *Bhoga*	6. district or subdivision
7. *Rāṣṭra*	7. subdivision, district
8. *Khaṇḍa*	8. subdivision
9. *Pañcāli*	9. unit of five villages
10. *Grāma*	10. village
11. *Pāṭaka*	11. part of a village

TABLE 2

A List of Official Titles Occurring in Orissan Inscriptions

Designation	Description
1. *Amātya*	1. minister or administrative officer of high rank
2. *Antaraṅga*	2. king's personal physician or private secretary or privy councillor
3. *Ājñā, dūtaka*	3. executor of a grant
4. *Aśvanāyaka*	4. commander of cavalry
5. *Buḍhāleṅkā*	5. chief servant or commander-in-chief
6. *Bhitara-bhaṇḍāra-adhikārī*	6. officer in charge of the inner storehouse or treasury

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Designation	Description
7. *Bhaṇḍārīa*	7. treasurer or superintendent of royal stores
8. *Bhaṭa*	8. constable or *pāik* or *piādā* or a regular soldier
9. *Bṛhad-bhogin*	9. *jāgīrdār* of a higher rank
10. *Bhogika, bhogin*	10. *ināmdār* or *jāgīrdār*
11. *Cāṭa*	11. leader or a group of constables or *pāiks* or *piādās* or a spy or an irregular soldier
12. *Choṭarāya*	12. second prince
13. *Dvāraparīkṣa*	13. gatekeeper of the king's chamber, palace or city
14. *Daṇḍapāśika*	14. police officer of subordinate rank
15. *Daṇḍanāyaka*	15. judge, general or magistrate
16. *Durgadeva*	16. commander of the fort
17. *Grāmapati*	17. village headman
18. *Hastyadhyakṣa*	18. superintendent of elephants
19. *Kūṭakolasa*	19. garrison maintained in the fort
20. *Kumāra mahāpātra*	20. prince who was also a senior minister or a senior minister attached to a prince
21. *Kāyastha*	21. scribe
22. *Kumārāmātya*	22. executive officer of the status of a prince
23. *Khaṇḍapāla*	23. customs inspector or superintendent of police or the officer in charge of a *khaṇḍa*
24. *Mantrī*	24. minister
25. *Mahāpratīhāra*	25. superintendent of the troops in charge of the defence of the person of the king, palace and capital city
26. *Mahāpātra*	26. minister of a higher rank or a senior minister
27. *Mahāsenāpati*	27. great leader of forces
28. *Mahā sāmanta*	28. landlord or feudatory of a higher rank
29. *Māṇḍalika*	29. governor of a *maṇḍala*
30. *Mahāsāndhivigrahika*	30. minister of higher rank in charge of peace and war
31. *Mahattara*	31. village headman or village elder
32. *Mahā bhogin*	32. superior *ināmdār*
33. *Mahākṣapaṭalika*	33. head of the department of records
34. *Pātra*	34. minister
35. *Puro śrīkaraṇa*	35. chief scribe or chief scribe-accountant or scribe or scribe-accountant of the capital city

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Designation	Description
36. *Pustapālaka*	36. keeper of records
37. *Parīkṣā*	37. governor or superintendent
38. *Pañca karaṇoparika*	38. chief superintendent of five administrative offices
39. *Peṭapāla*	39. record keeper
40. *Peḍapāla*	40. storekeeper of the king's record department
41. *Pišuna*	41. spy
42. *Rājasatka*	42. minister of a feudatory or a prince serving as a minister
43. *Rāutarāya*	43. third son or relative of the king
44. *Rāuta*	44. prince
45. *Rāṇaka*	45. feudatory, landholder
46. *Rahasyādhikārin*	46. private secretary
47. *Rāṣṭrakūṭa*	47. head of a *rāṣṭra*, district or subdivisiou
48. *Sandhivigrahika*	48. minister of peace and war
49. *Sarvādhikṛta*	49. chief administrator
50. *Senādhyakṣa*	50. leader of ten *senāpatis*, commander of army
51. *Sāmanta*	51. landlord or feudatory
52. *Sthānāntarika*	52. police officer, spy or officer in charge of the criminal department
53. *Śrīkaraṇa*	53. clerk or private secretary
54. *Sādyadhikaraṇa*	54. commander of cavalry
55. *Śāsanādhikārin*	55. carrier of royal messages of grant of land
56. *Śaivasthānaka*	56. superintendent of Śiva temples
57. *Thau puroparīkṣā*	57. chief suprintendent of accounts
58. *Tikāyat*	58. eldest prince
59. *Tadāyuktaka*	59. subdivisional officer
60. *Utthitāsanin*	60. courtier of special rank
61. *Viṣayapati*	61. chief district officer
62. *Vāhinīpati*	62. leader of army
63. *Vārgulika*	63. betel bearer of king
64. *Vallabha*	64. courtier
65. *Vetrika*	65. watchman

pati, antaraṅga, mahāpratīhāra, sarvādhikṛta, grāmapati, dvāraparīkṣa, buḍhāleṅkā, bhaṇḍārīa, thau puroparīkṣā, mahāpātra, pātra, bhitara bhaṇḍāra adhikārī, to be met with in the inscriptions of the kings of different dynasties, when critically analysed and studied, would bring to light the existence of different administrative units into which a kingdom was partitioned for the purpose of efficient administration, and

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of the existence of a hierarchy of officials, employed in different offices, both at the centre and in the provinces and districts.

Interesting details of the working of many administrative offices in 'medieval' Orissa are embedded in the accounts of inscriptions. An inscription[16] of the Imperial Gaṅga King Anaṅgabhīma II speaks of a learned Brahmin minister named Govinda as bearing the burden of the whole of the Gaṅga kingdom, and participating in important expeditions, leading to the expansion of the Gaṅga kingdom in the north, west and south.

The testimony of the said epigraph may be utilised to ascertain important facts about ministers of contemporary Orissa such as the occasional employment of Brahmins as ministers, recognition of proficiency in Brahmanical literature as a ministrative qualification, inclusion of warlike activities within the purview of normal ministering duties. It is worth noticing in this context that some of these official titles have in the course of centuries degenerated into mere surnames[17] still current in Orissa.

Importance for Religious History

Since the vast majority of inscriptions relate to religious grants in favour of priests and temples, not unoften are we furnished with information not only about different religious systems such as Jainism, Buddhism, Śaivism, Vaiṣṇavism, the solar cult which flourished in Orissa in this period but also about management, sources of income, functions and maintenance staff of various religious establishments which grew up in different parts of the region.

The Hindol copper plates, for instance, say that the Bhauma Kara King Śubhākara III, a great patron of Śaivism, granted the village of Noḍḍilo in Uttara Tosalī to the god Vaidyanātha-bhaṭṭāraka with the instruction that half the revenue of the village was to be utilised for *tapana*, scents, flower, lamps, incense, *naivedya*, *bali*, *caru* and *pūjā* of the god as well as for the maintenance of temple servants and the repair of the temple. The revenue of the other half was to be kept apart for the supply of *satra* and garments to ascetics.[18]

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A critical etymological analysis of the names of the localities and givers of gifts occurring in inscriptions is likely to enlighten us on the popularity and decline of different sects and cults in specific areas and times.

Importance for Social History

References to Brāhmaṇas, Kṣatriyas, Vaiśyas, Śūdras and various occupational groups scattered throughout inscriptions have proved very useful for studying the operational aspect of the *varṇa* and *jāti* systems in 'medieval' Orissa. The precedence of Brahmins over others in the social hierarchy is amply manifest. They are most often referred to in inscriptions and greatest beneficiaries of royal patronage in the form of land grants of varying sizes. Although the main functions the Brāhmaṇas performed were the study and teaching of the Vedas and performance of religious rites, there are numerous references to them as engaged in astrology, as envoys, composing charters, martial pursuits, civil services, management of village affairs and usury. They are described as being keen to migrate from one place to another and from one kingdom to another to better their material prospects. Gone were the days when travel beyond the traditional limit of Ārya-deśa entailed penance and residence was forbidden.

Interesting social institutions and customs like the institution of *devadāsīs* (the dedication of girls to the gods to life of service in the form of music and dance in temples) find mention, in most instances casually, in several epigraphic records.[19]

Importance for Agrarian History

Likewise, these inscriptions embody interesting details about different types of land tenure[20] (such as *nīvīdharma*, also called *akṣaya-nīvī-dharma*, and *bhūmi-chidrapidhānanyāya*), land measurement (like *hala*, *vāṭi*, *puṭṭi*, *muraja*), agricultural produce, crafts, industries and trade, both internal and foreign. References to coins and markets (*haṭṭa*) in Orissan inscriptions of this period are quite numerous and of great interest for ascertaining the true nature of the role

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of trade and a money economy in the life of the 'medieval' Orissan people.

Sometimes, inscriptions serve as a useful guide for ascertaining the delimitation and area of a village or town, the number and categories of artisans and craftsmen inhabiting it and the number and typology of houses located in the area. Reference in this context may be made to the Nagari plates[21] of the Imperial Gaṅga King Anaṅgabhīma III, dated c AD 1229-30, which speak of a 13th Century Orissan township covering 30 *vāṭis* of land, of which 20 were corn-fields and ten were homestead land.

The township contained four palatial houses with walls, *mukha-maṇḍapas* and *madhya-maṇḍapas* and 30 ordinary houses, the dwellings of many artisans and craftsmen such as a perfumer (*gāndhika*), a worker or dealer in conch shells (*śāṁkhika*), a splitter of wood (*pāṭakāra*), a goldsmith (*svarṇakāra*), a worker in bell metal (*kāṁsyika*), three sellers of betel leaf (*tambūlika*), a florist (*mālika*), a manufacturer or dealer in sugar (*gauḍika*), two milkmen (*gopāla*), two weavers (*tantuvāya*), two oilmen (*tailika*), two potters (*kumbhakāra*), three fishermen (*kaivarta*) and a barber[22] (*nāpita*) (*Pūraṇagrāme viṁśati-vāṭi-parimitā sasya-bhūmiḥ/ tasya pura-jana-jāti-nāmāni// tatra vaṇijaḥ gāndhika-śāṁkhika-pāṭakāra-svarṇṇakāra-kāṁsyikāḥ Vāpuli-Nārāyaṇa-Dāmodara-Mādhava-Citra-Soma-Vāhlu-Keśava-Mahādeva-Narasiṁgha-Śivu-nāmānaḥ// tāmbūlikāḥ Mahānāda-Somā-Iraṇḍunāmānaḥ// māliko Manū-nāmā gauḍiko Mahādevo nāmā/ gopālau Dhīru-Gabhī-nāmānau/ tantuvāyau Nāgu-Jagāināmānau/ tailikau Gaṇu-Sunyā-nāmānau/ kumbhakārau Arjjuna-Visū-nāmānau/ kaivarttāḥ Rāju-Vāsū-Padmanāmānaḥ/ nāpitaḥ śilpino rajakaś-ca//*).

Importance for Revenue System

A study of these epigraphs against the backdrop of the inscriptions of the earlier period would bring to light a steady increase in the number of taxes the state imposed. While the Chicacole plates[23] of the Early Gaṅga King Indravarman III, dated c AD 636, speak of two kinds of taxes, comprising *bhoga*, periodic supplies of fruits, firewood, flowers, and *bhāga*, royal share of the produce, one hears of about 15 such

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taxes in the Balijhari plates[24] of the Somavamsi King Udyotakeśarin of about 11th Century AD and of 36 kinds of taxes in the Velicherla grant[25] of the Gajapati King Pratāparudradeva issued about the beginning of the 16th Century AD.

TABLE 3

A List of Taxes Found in Balijhari Plates of Udyotakeśarin

Name	Description
1. *Ahi-daṇḍa*	tax payable for the maintenance of snake charmers
2. *Antarāvaḍḍi*	levy for the treatment of the king at the time of his illness
3. *Adattā*	interest or fine on the arrears of taxes
4. *Andhānuvā* or *arthāruvā*	tax payable by moneylenders for the amount loaned
5. *Bandha-daṇḍa*	ransom payable in lieu of imprisonment
6. *Coṭāla*	a kind of levy
7. *Hasti-daṇḍa*	tax payable for possession of elephants
8. *Mārgaṇika*	customs dues payable at outposts on roads
9. *Pratyandhāruvā* or *pratyartha-ruvā*	tax payable by moneylenders for the capital loaned and interest realised
10. *Padāti-jīva*	tax for maintenance of *pāiks*
11. *Pratīhāra*	tax for entry into the royal palace or for the maintenance of *pratīhārīs*
12. *Uparikara*	tax levied on cultivators having no proprietary right to soil
13. *Vijaya-vandāpanā*	*nazrānā* payable on king's return from a victorious campaign
14. *Vara-bali-varda*	tax for bullocks meant for prize fights

Persian Inscriptions

Though very rare compared with Sanskrit and Oriya inscriptions, those in Persian shed interesting light on the history of Orissa of the 'medieval' period. The inscription[26] of Prince Ulūgh Khān, also called Jūnā Khān, engraved on a *masjid* at Rajamahendri in Srikakulam district, stands today as definite proof of Muhammad Bin Tughlaq Shāh's invasion of Orissa around AD 1324.

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An Illustration

What has been said above about the importance of epigraphic evidence for the study of 'medieval' Orissan history may be illustrated with the help of the Siddheswar inscription of the reign of the Imperial Gaṅga monarch Narasiṁha IV. This inscription,[27] written in the Oriya language and script, is engraved on a stone *Vṛṣa-stambha* standing in the courtyard of the temple of Siddheśvara (Śiva in the liṅga form) at Siddheswar in the vicinity of Jajpur in Cuttack district, reads:

Vīra-śrī-Narasīṅghadevaṅka vīje rāje samaṁthu 19 srāhi kakaḍā-kīṣṇa 14 candra-vāre catur-dīga-daṇḍaparīkṣā śrīkaraṇa-paṭānāeka Visvanātha-mahāsenāpatiṅkra daṇḍaparīkṣā puruva-dīga-daṇḍa-pāṭaru Nandīkeśvara-sanī-mīgraṅkra vehoraṇe e-daṇḍapāṭara pasāita muduli koṭhakraṇa bhāga-loka samasta-vehoraṇa-anumate Raāṅga-vīse Bhaīṁgrāma-grāma jita māḍha pa 50 sakrabhāgaka-dāna ohoru pāukā bheṭā vodā parīdarśanā jāvata avadāna nāsti karari Vīra-śrī-Narasīṅghadevaṅkra.[28]

The inscription records the grant of a part of a village, called Bhaīṁgrama in Raāṅga-*viṣaya* in the Jajpur area of Cuttack district, that yielded revenue of 50 *māḍhas*, probably of silver, in favour of the god Siddheśvara by *Pātra* Siddheśvara Jenā who built a temple and erected a Śivaliṅga which was named after him. The *viṣaya* of Raāṅga formed a part of Pūrvadikdaṇḍapāṭa, the eastern administrative unit, placed in the charge of the Daṇḍaparīkṣā (governor) Nandikeśvara-*sāndhivigrahika*.

He was subordinate to Viśvanātha-*mahāsenāpati*, styled *Caturdik Daṇḍaparīkṣā*, the governor-general of a unit of four *daṇḍapāṭas*. The grant was made in the 19th *aṅka* year of King Narasiṁha with the consent of divisional officials like the *pasāita*, *mudula*, *koṣṭha-karaṇa* and *bhāgaloka*, and was exempted from the payment of taxes (*avadāna*), including *ohoru*, *pāukā*, *pāikā*, *bheṭa* and *paridarśana*.

The following facts emerge from this record:

1. King Narasiṁha IV ruled in Orissa in c AD 1394. The King Narasiṁha mentioned in the Siddheswar inscription is the

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same as Kaṅga Gaṅgādhara Rāya of Viśvanātha-*mahāsenāpati*, who served as *Caturdik Daṇḍaparīkṣā* in his 19th *aṅka* year, is spoken of in the Puri plates[29] of the same king as *Puro-śrī-karaṇa* Viśvanātha-*mahāsenāpati*. The inscription was issued in the *aṅka*[30] year 19 of Narasiṁha IV. Omitting, according to the rule, the years 1, 6 and 16, the 19th *aṅka* year of Narasiṁha IV would be equivalent to his 16th regnal year, corresponding to c AD 1394.

2. The Gaṅga kingdom was divided under Narasiṁha IV into large administrative units, each of which was composed of four *daṇḍapāṭas* (divisions) in the east, west, north and south. The administrative head of the unit of four *daṇḍapāṭas* was styled *Caturdik Daṇḍaparīkṣā*, whereas the governor of a *daṇḍapāṭa* was called *Daṇḍaparīkṣā*. Each *daṇḍapāṭa* was further subdivided into a number of *viṣayas* (districts), each containing several villages within its jurisdiction.

3. The governor of a *daṇḍapāṭa* was assisted in administration by a body of subordinate officials including a *pasāita*,[31] who was probably in charge of land in the possession of village artisans or of religious or charitable institutions, *mudula*, a servant of the god Jagannātha, *koṣṭha-karaṇa*, a revenue official and *bhāgaloka*,[32] the official who collected the state's share of produce, called *bhāga*. The approval of all these officials was necessary for making a grant of land even by a highly placed central official.

4. This inscription, when studied along with some other inscriptions of the same Gaṅga King Narasiṁha IV would reveal that the incumbents of some of the highest offices in the Gaṅga kingdom were subject to constant transfer, showing the effectiveness of control of the government over its officials. Viśvanātha-*mahāsenāpati* was the *Śrīkaraṇa Paṭṭanāyaka* of Vārāṇasī-Kaṭaka,[33] modern Cuttack, in AD 1391 but was appointed governor-general of a unit of four *daṇḍapāṭas* by c AD 1394.

5. The taxes the permanent tenants of a 14th century village in Orissa paid to the state included a watchman tax (*ohoru*), a tax on money realised by creditors from the debtors (*pāukā*), a tax for the maintenance of clubmen (*pāikā*), periodical offering of money (*bheṭa*), periodical supply of uncooked food (*voḍā*), a supervision tax (*paridarśana*) and probably the state's

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share of grain (*bhāga*).

6. The inscription refers to the practice of erecting a *Nandistambha* in front of a Śiva temple, installation of a Śiva *liṅga* and naming the god after the donor. Queen Mādhavadevī, wife of King Śubhākaradeva I, installed an image of Śiva in the form of a *liṅga* and designated the god Mādhaveśvara after her own name[34] (*Mādhaveśvara iti śrīmān-Bhavasyālayaḥ*).

7. The inscription shows that the Oriya language and script were fairly developed in the 14th century AD and were used as the approved medium of communication in official circles simultaneously with Sanskrit and the Gauḍīya alphabet.

Demerits of Epigraphic Evidence

The task of reconstructing history on the basis of epigraphic records is however not easy. The authenticity of epigraphic evidence is unimpeachable in those instances when it is corroborated by other sources, while it is disparaged as unhistorical in the vast majority. Generally speaking, the authors of inscriptions, particularly of *praśastis*, served as court poets and indulged, for reasons not difficult to imagine, in glorifying the achievements of their patrons, sometimes beyond limits, and suppressing unpalatable facts about their masters.

How often extravagant claims were advanced by such poets or officials on behalf of their patrons is clearly shown by the Maranjamura, also called Jatesinga-Dungri, inscription[35] which extols the achievements of the Somavaṁśī King Caṇḍīhara-Yayāti Mahāśivagupta III (c AD 1025-55) in these words:

Prathit-āneka-Nala-Nahūṣa-Māndhātṛ-Dilīpa-Bharata - Bhagīrath-ādi-rāja-varitaḥ/ Kaliṅga-Koṅgod-otkala-Kośala-svayaṁvara-prasiddhaḥ Gauḍa-Rāḍh-āmbara-prakarṣan-oddhātamārutaḥ sitāṁśu-vaṁśa-vimal-āmbara-purṇa-candra sva-bhujopārjita-Tri-Kaliṅg-ādhipatiḥ . parama-māheśvara-paramabhaṭṭārakaḥ śrī-Mahābhavagupta-pād-ānudhyāta-mahārājādhirāja-parameśvara-pra-ṇamita-rājany-opa-sevita-pād-āravinda-yugalaḥ śrī-Mahāśivagupta śrī-Yayāti-devaḥ kuśalī//

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This passage[36] credits Mahāśivagupta III with successful military operations against countries like Karṇāṭa, Lāṭa, Gujarat, Drāviḍa, Kāñcī, Kaliṅga, Koṅgoda, Utkala, Kośala, Gauḍa, Rāḍha and Tri-Kaliṅga by the third year of his reign. This claim was hardly based on facts.

It was impossible for a king like Mahāśivagupta III to conquer Karṇāṭa when the Western Cālukyas flourished as rulers of Kāñcī and Tamil Nadu as long as the Imperial Colas and the Cālukya Colas held sway over the eastern coast or even Gujarat, which was then under the possession of the Cālukya kings.

Mention of these countries as having been conquered by Mahāśivagupta III is therefore mere bombast and aptly compares with the language used by the court poet of King Ratnapāla of Assam in glorifying his patron and attributing to him the conquest of countries which the armies of Assam could never have reached.[37]

The Bhubaneswar inscription describes Kapilendra as having conquered Karṇāṭa, Gulbarga, Mālava, Delhi and Gauḍa. Although Kapilendra succeeded in establishing a vast kingdom, which in its palmy days stretched from Midnapore in West Bengal to Trichinopoly in Tamil Nadu, there is as yet no evidence in favour of his alleged conquest of Mālava and Delhi.

The title '*Gauḍeśvara-navakoṭi-Karṇāṭa-Kalavargeśvara*', lord of Gauḍa, Karṇāṭa-nine-crores and Kalabarga (Gulbarga), was applied to a large number of kings from Kapilendra onwards, although the rule of the majority of them was confined to only a fragment of Orissa.

The importance of inscriptions as historical documents is likewise considerably diminished by frequent contrary statements about facts and events. The date of the accession of the Imperial Gaṅga King Kāmārṇava, the son and successor of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga, is for example correctly quoted in the Dasgoba[38] and Nagari[39] plates of AD 1198 and 1229-30 respectively, as the Śaka year, counted by *nanda* (9), *ṛtu* (6), *vyoma* (0) and *candra* (1), which in accordance to the *vāma-gati* principle, would yield Śaka year 1069, corresponding to AD 1147.

This is not in harmony with the testimony of the later

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records of the family which wrongly read *veda* (4) instead of *nanda* (9), thus making the date five years earlier. Besides this or other discrepancies, to be met with in inscriptional records, the evidence derived from epigraphic records is often found to contradict the testimony of other sources.

Thus, whereas the Kenduli copper plates[40] attribute the construction of the present temple of Jagannātha to the Imperial Gaṅga monarch Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga (c AD 1077-1147), the *Mādalā Pāñji*[41] represents King Anaṅgabhīma III as the real founder of the temple at Puri. Another serious demerit of epigraphic evidence is that facts and events, as recorded in inscriptions, cannot in most instances be arranged in terms of definite chronology for the reason that many records are undated, and even those dated are reckoned in some obsolete eras like Gaṅga[42] and Bhauma Kara, the exact coincidence of which with the well-known Christian reckoning still defies a unanimously accepted solution.

Further, inscriptions, not only of Orissa but also of other parts of the Indian subcontinent which were engraved on stones or copper plates, mostly by illiterate or semi-literate stone-cutters or goldsmiths, often betray serious errors which have rendered the interpretation of the text difficult and controversial.

To the list of epigraphic demerits may be added lack of definiteness in filling up some crucial gaps or in deciphering illegible passages occurring in inscriptions, thus giving rise, not without reason, to a series of contrary speculations on the restoration and interpretation of passages.

An illustration may be considered necessary to highlight the seriousness of the problem. BC Mazumdar[43] reads a part of a passage in the Jatesinga-Dungri plates of Mahāśivagupta III Yayāti as *śvetāṅga-Vaṅga-vimal-āmvara-purṇa-candraḥ*, meaning "who is the full moon in the pure sky of Vaṅga", but the corresponding portion is restored by SN Rajaguru[44] as *sitāṁśu-vaṁśa-vimal-āmvara-purṇa-candraḥ* in the sense of "one who is the full moon in the clear sky of the family of the moon."

The reading, as interpreted by BC Mazumdar, contains an allusion to Mahāśivagupta III's conquest of the Vaṅga country, whereas the alternative reading of SN Rajaguru does not

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imply any political achievement of the Somavaṁśī king but poetically discloses the name of the family to which Mahāśivagupta belonged.

Composers and Engravers of Inscriptions

A few words about the composers and engravers of inscriptions may be considered relevant to our topic of investigation. The composers of the inscriptions in early and 'medieval' Orissa were generally royal officials, styled *Deśākṣapaṭalādhikṛta*[45] (head of the department of records) and *Sandhivigrahin*[46] (minister in charge of peace and war), though instances of other officials like the *Rahasika*[47] (private secretary), *Amātya*[48] (minister or high administrative officer), *Daṇḍanāyaka*[49] (judge, general or magistrate), *Sarvādhikṛta*[50] (chief administrator), *Mantri*[51] (minister), *Peṭapāla*[52] (record

TABLE 4

A List of Engravers

Name	Caste	Charter, composed	Period
1. Boppadeva (*IO*, I, part II, p 91)	Upādhyāyin Brahmin	Rithapur plates	5th century AD
2. Jayasiṁha (*IO*, I, part II, p 176)	goldsmith	Purushottamapur plates	7th century AD
3. Hari (*IO*, II, p 235)	merchant	Khillingar plates	7th century AD
4. Naṅkacyamācari (*IO*, II, p 169)	goldsmith	Parlakimedi plates	9th century AD
5. Vimalacandra (*IO*, II, p 266)	brazier	Badakhimedi plates	10th/11th century AD
6. Padmanābha (EI, XXVII, p 50)	merchant	Madras Museum plates	10th century AD
7. Panāka (*IO*, IV, p 185)	worker in bell metal*	Nibinna plates	11th century AD
8. Lokāyin (*IO*, V, p 49)	coppersmith	Kapoteswar plates	12th century AD

*The term *taṭhakāra* which was applied to Panāka may be taken to mean a worker in bell metal. It is *thaṭari* in Oriya, *ṭhāṭāri* in Bengali and *ṭhaṭherā* in Hindi. The author is thankful to Professor K Mahapatra of the Visva-Bharati University for this information.

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keeper) and *Bhaṭa*[53] (regular soldier) also doing so are also known.

Jāgīrdārs of the rank of the *Bṛhad Bhogin*,[54] *Bhogika*[55] and *Rāṇaka*[56] are also known to have composed inscriptions. There are also instances[57] to show how the text of inscriptions was sometimes prepared by members of the writer class who came to be crystallised in course of centuries into a caste called *Kāyastha* or *Karaṇa*. Court poets[58] and military officials[59] are likewise known to have composed charters.

The frequent use of terms like *suvarṇa-kāra*,[60] *suvarṇa-kāra-putra*,[61] *akṣaśālin*,[62] *arkaśālin*[63] with reference to the engravers of inscriptions would suggest that the goldsmiths were usually employed for the task of engraving, though coppersmiths[64] (*tāmra-kāra*), braziers[65] (*kāṁsa-kāra*), masons[66] (*sūtradhāra*) and artists[67] (*śilpin*, *vijñānika*) were also appointed for the purpose. Instances showing the employment of the members of the trading[68] and priestly[69] communities (*Śreṣṭhin*, Brāhmaṇa) in engraving inscriptions are recorded. That some of the engravers were men of position and eminence is evident from the feudatory titles *Sāmanta*[70] and *Bhogika*[71] applied to them. The engraver of the Puri plates of Narasiṁha IV was a military officer[72] named Gurudāsa.[73]

Monuments and Sculptures

The terms *dev-ālaya*, *dev-āyatana*, *deva-kula*, *deva-gṛha* and the like, as employed in early Indian literature to signify temples, would clearly suggest that in ancient India, as in contemporary Crete, ostentatious structures were primarily intended to be residences of gods, places where divine images were enshrined.

Although this primary functional aspect of temples was never lost sight of, the introduction of complicated rites and rituals, incorporation of new customs and practices into the approved modality of worship, use of stone instead of brick and wood as building material, coalescence of Aryan, Drāviḍa[74] and Nāga elements, greater concern for providing the devotees with comfort, readiness of patrons to spend large sums of money, development of masonry skill, led to the development of the simple single-cellar temple into a gigantic

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structure with a pronounced accentuation, both horizontally and vertically, and a marked inclination towards a greater elevation and minuter details.

With the addition of the *nāṭa-mandira*, *bhoga-maṇḍapa* and *pārśva-devatā* temples to the *mukha-sālā* or *jaga-mohana* and the main shrine called *baḍa-deul* in the 15th century AD[75] or somewhat earlier,[76] the climax of the evolutionary process of Indian temple architecture in Orissa, a process that was ushered in at a much earlier date,[77] was reached.

The Liṅgarāja temple at Bhubaneswar and the Jagannātha temple at Puri, each containing besides a group of *pārśva-devatā* temples an array of four buildings, comprising the *baḍa-deul*, also called *rekha-deul*, inner sanctuary, *mukha-sālā*, also called *jaga-mohana*, *mukha-maṇḍapa* and *bhadra* or *pīḍhā-deul*, audience or porch hall, *nāṭa-maṇḍapa*, dancing hall, and *bhoga-maṇḍapa*, hall of offering, stand today as classic examples of 'medieval' Orissan architecture.

The Sun temple[78] at Konarak, in Puri district, which resembles a *ratha* (chariot), is built on a plinth (*pābhāga*), with carvings of 24 wheels, representing 12 bright and 12 dark fortnights in a complete cycle of a year, and is symbolic of "a majestic stride of the Sun god over the horizon of the sky", being universally regarded as the gem of Orissan architecture. It is, however, a pity that the temple is now bereft of the original *śikhara* (tower)[79] with which it was once adorned.[80]

The temple has always been conceived in India as the "visible outer casement of the invisible deity, a visible image of which is installed in it as an emblem of the invisible spirit" which pervades all nature. It is, like the human body, the outer visible shape of the shapeless. This explains why the various parts of a temple in Orissa or elsewhere in India are designated by names which correspond to various parts or limbs of the human body.

Accordingly, the task of decorating the outer face of a temple with a lavish display of sculptures and paintings was invariably taken by the artists in right earnest while the interior was, generally speaking, left unornamented. Because of their inability to appreciate the *rationale* behind the ornamentation of Indian temples, most European scholars like

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Fergusson have unjustifiably looked upon the outer display as an unnecessary waste of money.[81]

Indeed, in Orissa the walls of the temples and caves were copiously carved from almost top to bottom with images called *pratimā* or *citra*[82] of saints, gods and goddesses which the artists were normally forbidden to carve on residences. It is worth observing that whereas in South India ornamentation in the form of sculpture was deliberately made subservient to architecture, in Orissa sculptors and masons were granted unfettered licence to exhibit their respective arts in full flourish.

Religious Importance

Temples, along with the images of gods and goddesses, either placed in the inner sanctuary or carved on the outer walls and the sporadic finds of detached sculptures and architectural pieces strewn over different parts of Orissa, afford us interesting glimpses into the religious beliefs and practices of the people. The discovery in one place of many images and sculptures or temples belonging to a particular sect or cult would bring to light the predominance of that sect or cult in the area concerned. In most instances, conclusions deduced from a critical study of architecture and sculpture are substantiated by the testimony of literary evidence.

Buddhism and Jainism

Attention may be drawn to the carvings, in relief, of the figures of Jain *Tīrthaṅkaras*, as found on the Navamuni and Lalāṭendu caves of Khaṇḍagiri near Bhubaneswar in Puri district. The walls of these caves are ornamented with carvings of ten and eight *Tīrthaṅkaras*[83] respectively. Although the date of these two caves is uncertain there are some convincing reasons to assign them to the 11th Century AD.

The very fact that Khaṇḍagiri was selected by the Somavaṁśī kings for carving the figures of Jain *Tīrthaṅkaras* is itself a testimony to the continuity of Khaṇḍagiri as a Jain pocket in Orissa from about the 1st Century BC, the epoch of *Mahārāja* Khāravela, to the 11th Century AD.

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A large number of *Tantric* Buddhist images have been unearthed in Cuttack district at Udayagiri, Ratnagiri and Lalitagiri. Outstanding sculptures at Udayagiri are a colossal image of a two-armed Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara, wearing a headdress that contains the figure of the Dhyānī Buddha Amitābha[84] seated in meditation, the image of a two-armed, seated Prajñāpāramitā and a fine image of the Buddha in *bhūmi-sparśa-mudrā*, flanked by Maitreya[85] and Mañjuśri.

Of those of Lalitagiri reference may be made to a superb image of Maitreya standing gracefully on a lotus pedestal, an image of Tārā[86] standing on two crouching figures, and a two-armed image of Mañjuśrī.

Ratnagiri has yielded, among other objects, life-size images of Avalokiteśvara and Tārā standing in *tri-bhaṅga* pose, and an image of two-armed Heruka wearing a garland of human heads and dancing on a corpse in *ardha-paryaṅka* pose, with a *khaṭvāṅga* in his left hand.

The overwhelming numerical superiority of the Tantric Buddhist images, assignable to the 8th-11th Centuries AD substantiates the importance of this group of three closely situated sites as constituting a stronghold of Tantric Buddhism in the early 'medieval' period and furnishes positive proof of the spread of Tantrism from its land of origin in northwestern or northeastern India to Orissa, where it fused with Buddhism, particularly the Vajrayāna system by the beginning of the 8th Century AD. The presence of Tantric teachers like Bodhiśrī, Bitoba, Abodhutipa and Nāropa, as practising *yoga* at Ratnagiri is expressly testified by the Tibetan accounts.

The images of Buddhist and Jain gods and goddesses were not made of stone alone. They were also made of metals like bronze, called *aṣṭa-dhātu* in the *Śilpa* texts. From the village of Achyutarajapur, near Banpur in Puri district, a hoard of 130 bronze images was discovered. On the basis of the copper plate grants of the Somavaṁśī King Indraratha, which accompany these images, they may be assigned to the 11th Century AD. The gods and goddesses, represented by these images are Vajrasattva (No 5) seated in *vajrāsana*, Padmapāṇi (15), the spiritual son of the Dhyānī Buddha Amitābha, generally in *lalita* pose, Mañjuśrī (2) in *arapacana*

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pose, Heruka (1) in *ardha-paryaṅka* pose, Jambhala (1), the Buddhist god of wealth, Trailokyavijaya (1), an emanation of Akṣobhya in *pratyālīḍha* pose, Kurukullā (2), a form of Tārā, Māricī (1) in *pratyālīḍha* pose, Tārā (11) in *varada* pose and Hārītī (5) seated on a lotus pedestal and carrying a child on her lap, all belonging to the Vajrayāna pantheon.

Baudh has yielded a few bronze images, including a Maitreya seated gracefully in *lalita* pose on a throne, and a four-armed, one-faced and richly ornamented Śaṅkhanātha Lokeśvara. These metal images, usually small and portable, may be taken either as the products of local artists or objects from outside, and accordingly any conclusion based on them in regard to the religious beliefs and practices of the areas of their discovery would be inadequate.

The historical importance of the image of Trailokyavijaya, showing this four-faced, eight-armed Buddhist deity trampling Maheśvara and Gaurī, can hardly be overemphasised, for such images have to be reckoned as religious manifestoes displayed by Buddhists to emphasise the superiority of their deities over the Brahmanical gods and goddesses and stand in striking contrast to other syncretic images which preach mutual respect and harmony among votaries of different sects and cults.

The stone images of Aparājitā, showing the Buddhist goddess trampling Gaṇeśa, discovered at Nalanda and assignable to the 9th-10th Centuries AD, may likewise be grouped in the same category. A few bronze images of Jain *Tīrthaṅkaras* have been discovered at Kakatpur in Puri district.

A comparison of Jain images with the Buddhist described above would show how Buddhism, unlike Jainism, which remained more or less aloof from extraneous influences, admitted into its fold several elements from Tantrism and Saktism in order to make itself more acceptable to the people at large. The iconography of images, enshrined in temples and the *pūjā-vidhis* which are still in vogue in different temples suggest that not only Buddhism but also the Vaiṣṇava and Śaiva sects, along with the Saura, Śākta and Gāṇapatya cults fused with Tantrism, a process which gained momentum from the 9th Century AD, as shown by RC Hazra[87] in his analysis of Puranic texts.

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TABLE 5

A List of Orissan Temples

Name	Location	Founder	Date of construction
1. Śatrughneśvara	Bhubaneswar	Śailodbhavas (?)	7th Century
2. Paraśurāmeśvara*	Bhubaneswar	Śailodbhavas (?)	7th or 8th Century
3. Śiśireśvara	Bhubaneswar	Not known	9th Century
4. Siddheśvara	Bhubaneswar	Not known	10th Century
5. Brahmeśvara	Bhubaneswar	Kolāvatī, mother of Udyotakeśarin	11th Century
6. Liṅgarāja	Bhubaneswar	Later Somavaṁśī kings, Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga was a patron of the temple	latter half of 11th Century
7. Kedāreśvara	Bhubaneswar	Pramāḍi, a younger brother of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga was a patron of the temple	beginning of 12th Century
8. Jagannātha	Puri	Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga	first half of 12th Century
9. Megheśvara	Bhubaneswar	Svapneśvara, brother-in-law of Rājarāja (c AD 1170-90)	latter half of 12th Century
10. Pārvatī	Bhubaneswar	Bhānudeva I was one of the patrons of the temple	beginning of 13th Century
11. Ananta-Vāsudeva**	Bhubaneswar	Candrāvatī, daughter of Anaṅgabhīma III	c AD 1278
12. Kapileśvara	Vicinity of Bhubaneswar	Gajapati kings (?)	15th or 16th Century

*It is not unlikely that the temple was originally called Parāśareśvara after the distinguished Pāśupata teacher Parāśara.

**Temples Nos 8 and 11 are Vaiṣṇava shrines whereas the others are Śaivite.

Hindu Sects

The Śaiva temple of Liṅgarāja in Bhubaneswar which, if tradition[88] is to be relied upon, was begun by the Somavaṁśī King Yayāti III and completed by his son Mahābhavagupta Udyotakeśarin, enshrines in its *sanctum sanctorum* a *svayam-*

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bhu liṅga, representing the combined manifestation of Hari and Hara.

Thus, besides showing a peculiar propensity for religious synthesis, a fact which is further borne out by the inclusion of a number of Vaiṣṇava rites in the worship of Liṅgarāja, and by the presence of a figure of Garuḍa by the side of the bull on the votive column in front of the *bhoga-maṇḍapa*, it bears testimony to the prevalence of worship of Śiva in the *liṅga* form in the area around Bhubaneswar in the 11th Century AD, a conclusion which stands substantiated by the representation of Śiva in the symbol of *liṅga* invariably in the *sanctum sanctorum* of all the Śaiva temples of the place, as well as by the testimony of the sculptural scenes carved at the base of the Rājārāṇī temple.

That Śiva was also worshipped in a number of anthropomorphic forms is proved by the evidence of the Paraśurāmeśvara temple which contains a carved figure of four-armed Śiva, the Vaital temple which has an image of Śiva in a terrifying pose and the Brahmeśvara temple which contains images of four-armed Naṭarāja.[89] The ithyphallic representation of Lakuleśa,[90] sometimes in the company of his disciples and the depiction of the practice of installing *liṅgas* in commemoration of departed teachers, as occasionally noticed in the sculptures of Bhubaneswar and other places, would further prove the prevalence of Pāśupata Śaivism in Bhubaneswar and other parts of Orissa in the early 'medieval' period.

The Liṅgarāja complex also contains sculptures showing Pārvatī with her right hand on the shoulder of Hara and her face towards the latter who is seated to her right. The importance of such composite sculptures, as found in the Liṅgarāja and other temples, lies in that the Śaivites worshipped Śiva not in isolation but in the company of Pārvatī or Śakti. Mention may be made of the composite images of Hari-Hara found in the Vaital temple, one half of the image representing Śiva and the other Viṣṇu.

These images are indicative of the close relation between Śaivism and Vaiṣṇavism, or the spirit of religious eclecticism among the votaries of different sects and cults. The syncretic images, including those of Ardhanārīśvara,[91] Lakṣmī-Nārāyaṇa, Śakti-Gaṇapati, Tri-mūrti, Hari-Hara-Pitāmaha,

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Hari-Hara-Hiraṇyagarbha, Candra-Arka-Pitāmaha and Mārtaṇḍa-Bhairava, arose in a comparatively late period, as is evident from the references to numerous such deities in later texts like the *Kālikā Purāṇa* and *Śilpa-ratna*.

Compared with the numerous Śaiva shrines, the Vaiṣṇava shrines are remarkably sparse in the early 'medieval' period, the old Jagannātha temple at Puri, the Pañca-Pāṇḍava temple at Gangeswarpur, the Maṇibhadreśvara temple at Bhubaneswar and the Gopāla temple at Ranipur Jharial are notable Vaiṣṇava shrines of the day. But with the accession of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga to the throne in c AD 1110 the situation changed considerably. Vaiṣṇavism, which came to enjoy royal support on a large scale from this time onwards, was on the ascendant in Orissa.[92]

This being primarily the age of religious synthesis, Vaiṣṇavism did not completely eclipse Śaiva, Buddhist and Śākta worship but assimilated certain ideas from these faiths.[93] Among the various Vaiṣṇava shrines erected in this period are the present temple of Jagannātha at Puri, another Jagannātha temple at Vārāṇasī-Kaṭaka, the Ananta-Vāsudeva temple at Bhubaneswar and those at Mukhalingam, Srikurmam and Simhachalam.

The increasing popularity of Vaiṣṇavism is demonstrated not only by the number of temples erected but also by the predominance of Vaiṣṇava elements in the scheme of decoration of temples, also Saivite.[94] The images of Vāmana, Varāha, Nṛsiṁha, Rāma in temples prove that the incarnations of Viṣṇu were well-known in Orissa, a conclusion corroborated by the popularity of Jayadeva's *Gīta-Govinda*. As indicated earlier, the iconographic programme of the exterior and interior decoration of temples clearly exhibits a peculiar propensity for religious synthesis even in the case of Vaiṣṇavism which came to be imbued with primitive cults, Buddhism, Saktism, Tantrism and other Brahmanical sects and cults.

It is worth mentioning in this connection that beneath the spirit of religious tolerance there was an undercurrent of communal disharmony. An Asokan lion capital bearing an inscription has been recovered near the Bhāskareśvara temple in Bhubaneswar. The inscription indicates that the Asokan pillar was probably converted into a *Śiva liṅga* of that temple

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around the 5th Century AD.[95]

Representation of the Buddha on the sacrificial post (*yūpa*) in front of the Vaital temple probably demonstrates the animosity[96] of the Pāśupata Śaivas towards Buddhism in the 8th Century AD, when the temple was built. A 14th Century *masjid* at Rajamahendri was originally the principal Brahmanical temple of the place and had been converted into a *masjid* by Muhammad Bin Tuglaq Shāh in the course of his invasion of southern Orissa around AD 1324.[97]

The discovery of prehistoric sites by archeologists, which consequently widens the horizon of our knowledge, is a familiar event in the history of modern Indian historical researches. The discovery of 'medieval' sites is also reported, although with much less frequency. The discovery of a group of hypethral temples of Causaṭ Joginīs by KN Mahapatra in 1953 has brought to light the existence of 8th or 9th Century DA Tantric *pīṭha* at Hirapur on the river Bhargavi in Puri district.

Beglar's discovery of Ranipur-Jharial, a 9th Century AD Tantric site in Bolangir district containing the temples of Causaṭ Yoginīs, is an important landmark in shedding more light on this era. These two groups of Causaṭ Yoginī temples, along with those at Bheraghat and Mitauli in Madhya Pradesh, are circular in shape unlike the Khajuraho group of temples which are rectangular.

Although the presence of one or two monuments or of a few sculptural pieces of one sect or cult is no sure indication of the popularity of that particular religious system in the area of their discovery, when such specimens are found in adequate numbers and stand numerically superior to those of other religious systems they can hardly be dismissed as inconsequential evidence.

The architectural and sculptural remains at Bhubaneswar, Puri, Konarak, Jajpur and Mahavinayaka Parvata indicate their importance as centres of the Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava, Saura, Śākta and Gāṇapatya sects respectively. This is not only borne out by the names Ekāmrakṣetra, Puruṣottamakṣetra, Arkakṣetra, Virajākṣetra and Gaṇapatikṣetra, applied to them respectively but also by the evidence of literature and inscriptions.[98]

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Socio-Economic Importance

The evidence of temples and sculptures may be utilised by the historian to ascertain the religious milieu of the period in which they were executed, carved, patronised and sustained. But the importance of these art objects as materials for the study of history also extends to all important facets of human behaviour and culture.

It is now admitted on all hands that "Indian art has not always been a purely religious one", and even a cursory glance at temples and at texts on *Vāstu-vidyā* and *Citra-vidyā* reveals how door jambs, compound walls, archways and *maṇḍapas* of temples all over India are decorated with figures of birds, trees, vases, human and animal couples, foliage, lotuses, goblins of various forms, dramatic scenes, ornaments, foot soldiers, archers, wrestlers, villages, markets, drinking places, battle-fields and couples (*mithunas*).

This is not at all surprising, for the structural shrines of this period were generally located on plains and in fertile regions in close proximity to habitational areas. A careful but combined study of these mundane scenes, depicted in various parts of temples scattered throughout Orissa, is likely to reveal many interesting facts about the daily life of the Oriyas of that period, including food, drink, clothing, amusements, economic conditions and the scientific and technological advances.

Representation of male figures, both gods and common people, wearing *dhotis* and *chādar* or scarf as upper garment in many sculptures of the period provides us with an idea about the apparel of the people of 'medieval' Orissa. The representation of dancing girls, dressed in close-fitting trousers and other female figures as using *sāḍīs* for covering the lower part of the body and a bodice or *chauli* as upper garment, as found in the sculptures of the temples, likewise enables us to familiarise ourselves with the dress of Orissan women in the period of our investigation.

The sculptures of the period bear witness to the use of a variety of ornaments in 'medieval' Orissa such as the ear-flower (*karṇa-phula*), necklace (*ratnahāra*), girdle, armlets, ear-rings, wrist ornaments and anklets (*kiṁkinī*). Hair styles, too, are depicted in detail.

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Compared with inscriptions, temples are less useful, but a combined study of temples and the inscriptions they bear would afford us an interesting glimpse into the exact nature of the role they played in the cultural and economic life of the 'medieval' Orissans, a glimpse which temples studied in isolation can hardly yield.

As revealed by epigraphs, temples were important centres of cultural activities, including festivals and marriages. The Bhubaneswar inscription[99] of the Gaṅga King Anaṅgabhīma III speaks of a temple as being the venue of such festivals as *Parvotsava* and *Mahotsava* and of such ceremonies as marriages.

The Jagannātha temple at Puri still celebrates annually the car festival[100] (*ratha-yātrā*) which is also celebrated, though more modestly than at the Jagannātha temple, at the Liṅgarāja temple at Bhubaneswar on *Aśokāṣṭamī*, the 8th day of the dark half of the month of Caitra, when the proxy of Tribhubaneśvara, called Candraśekhara, is taken in a *ratha* to the temple of Rāmeśvara.

Temples, likewise, patronised fine arts like dance and music and Vedic learning. They also served as market centre for the large quantities of grain, cattle and other articles donated by patrons and pilgrims had to be disposed of at regular intervals to avoid waste and unnecessary accumulation, either in exchange for commodities or for cash payment.

In addition, temples in Orissa, like those in other parts of India, served as employers, appointing administrators, including treasurers and accountants, ritualists, cooks, decorators and junior assistants, craftsmen such as potters, carpenters, goldsmiths, musicians, dancers and others, the number of employees varying from temple to temple in proportion to its importance.[101]

The prolific and magnificent architectural display which Orissa exhibited all through the "Middle Ages", particularly from the 7th to the 14th Century AD, presupposes that members of the ruling class and other patrons[102] of masons and sculptors had adequate leisure and resources to contemplate and implement the construction of so many enormously expensive religious edifices.

It is conceivable that stability in the form of internal secu-

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rity provided the people with leisure, whereas the resources were doubtless mainly derived from trade and commerce, both inland and foreign. It may not be a mere accident that most of Orissa's magnificent temples are located on the coastal tract which served as the meeting ground of indigenous and foreign traders and merchants.

Erotic Sculptures

Erotic sculptures (*mithuna*) are found on the door jambs, outer walls, flanking the niches containing the *pārśvadevatās*, the recessed panel of the *kāṇṭi* of the *śikhara* where the *bāḍa* (wall) terminates, and on the various recessed portions of the *śikhara* of the temples at Puri, Bhubaneswar, Konarak and other places. The erotic motifs depict a variety of themes and cover an extensive range of sexual expressions from a mild gesture to an actual involvement of lovers in the sex act.

Of late, an attempt has been made to classify these sculptures into six[104] basic types: (1) representing "subdued or moderate eroticism"; (2) showing *saṅghāṭaka* relationship; (3) depicting a copulating or love-making couple helped by a male or female or an eunuch attendant or attendants; (4) portraying the *goyūthika* relationship, where one man participates in sexual activity with more than two women or *vice versa*; (5) representing a "regular orgy" where a group of men or women simultaneously participates in sexual activities; and (6) also an orgy but different from the preceding type in that the couples participate as couples and not promiscuously.

But this classification, however exhaustively made, falls far short of accommodating all instances of sexual representation in temple art. The bold representation of sexual motifs on religious buildings in Orissa and in other parts of India seems to be antithetical to the goals and ideals of Hindu culture which is spiritual and other-worldly in ethos. Though the use of these motifs has not been satisfactorily explained, much has been written on the subject. Among the theories advanced, the following may be enumerated:

(1) The erotic figures are symbolic representations of the union of Ātman and Brahman and Puruṣa and Prakṛti, the male and female principles of the universe and convey the

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"phenomenal aspect of the non-dual state of the Highest Reality".

(2) The sculptures represent the three well-known *puruṣārthas*, *Dharma* being seen on the upper part of the temple, *Artha* on the middle and *Kāma* on the lower.

(3) The figures were carved to highlight the idea that sexual desires had to be subjugated by those intending to attain the divine.

(4) The *mithuna* figures are tests of a pilgrim's spiritual progress.

(5) The sexual figures were displayed as a means of sex education.

(6) The sexual sculptures have their origin in magic and fertility rites and were carved in the belief that sex brings appeasement of evil spirits and calamities. These reveal the preponderant influence of magic, fertility cult and Tantrism in "medieval" Indian society.[105]

The rationale of sexual representation in religious art may lie in any of these factors or may be due to a phenomenon as yet unascertained.

A Few More Observations

Thus temples and sculptures provide the historian with information concerning the thoughts, aspirations, activities and life patterns of the common and upper-class people. But the picture we get of society, based on architectural and sculptural evidence, is not comprehensive, for the architecture and sculptures that have survived till this day are of a religious nature, while those that may be termed secular were built or carved on perishable materials and have mostly succumbed to the ravages of time.

Secondly, since most of these temples and sculptures are undated, any suggestion based on stylistic grounds alone in regard to chronology will never be certain. Thirdly, while carving a figure and depicting scenes of mundane life the artists have often sacrificed naturalism for the sake of embellishment and ornamentation, thus rendering the task of the historian even more difficult. Difficulty in identifying the sculptures in many instances, consequent upon the artists'

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violation of the rules laid down in the *Silpasastras* in carving images, poses a serious impediment to a proper interpretation and analysis of the objects found.

Coins

Compared to epigraphs, literature and foreign accounts, coins have proved an inadequate source for the study of "medieval" Orissan history. This, however, does not mean that they have no importance at all. Coins, not unoften, are found to preserve the names of kings who are otherwise unknown to us. They corroborate and supplement our knowledge of those already known. Their provenances may sometimes indicate, in the face of corroborative evidence, political significance. They afford us an insight into the political, religious and other motives of the issuers. They shed, in no insignificant manner, light upon the economic conditions of the period.

Indeed, a close study of the different elements, characteristics and attributes of coins such as metals, metrology, symbols, provenances and the quantum is always fruitful in ascertaining a volume of information which, if analysed at the backdrop of the knowledge derived from other well-known sources, may enable the historian to obtain a fairly accurate picture of the period of their circulation.

Gaṅga Fanams

A large number of small circular gold coins, described by numismatists as Gaṅga *Fanams*,[106] have been discovered from different parts of Orissa. The obverse of these coins generally shows the figure of a recumbent bull along with one or two of such symbols as the conch shell, crescent, *linga*. The reverse bears an Oriya *sa*, placed horizontally above, with the left face downwards. Below the letter stand one or two numerical figures indicative of the dates of their issue.

In some instances the top of these coins is occupied by a short legend of three letters which has tentatively been read by Hoernle[107] and Hultzsch[108] as *Śrī-Gaṅga*. These coins vary in size between 0.37″ and 0.42″ and weigh between 6.87 and 8.37 grains.[109]

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The attribution of the Gaṅga *Fanams* is still a vexed question. While Hultzsch assigns them to the Imperial Gaṅga monarch Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga, AC Banerji[110] suggests a much longer period extending over the rule of both the Early and Imperial Gaṅga kings as the date of issue of these coins. The theory that these coins were the sole issues of Avantavarman Coḍagaṅga cannot be definitely proved in the absence of the name of the said king on the coins. But that they were struck by the kings of the Gaṅga dynasty seems to be fairly certain in view of the considerations noted below.

First, the representation of the bull on the obverse of these coins seems to connect them with the Gaṅga kings who had the bull as their dynastic emblem.

Secondly, the numerical figures, appearing on these coins, are strikingly similar to those of the Imperial Gaṅga inscriptions.

And finally, if the reading of *Śrī-Gaṅga*, as suggested by some scholars, is accepted, there would be no difficulty in ascribing these coins to the Gaṅga kings. These coins have been found in different parts of Orissa like Cuttack, Angul, Dhenkanal and Ganjam[111] districts.

The rule of the Early Gaṅgas did not extend beyond Ganjam in the north whereas almost all the areas covered by the provenances of these coins are known to have formed parts of the Imperial Gaṅga dominions. Accordingly, these coins[112] may be assigned to the reign of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga and his successors. Discovery of a few coins of the series from Tamluk and the surrounding region in Midnapore district need not be taken as an indication of the territorial extension of the Gaṅga dominions to southwestern Bengal, popularly known as Daṇḍabhukti.

Gold Coins from Parimalgiri

In 1942, 119 small gold coins were recovered at Parimalgiri[113] in the erstwhile Patna estate. The obverse of these coins shows the figure of a lion in the centre, but as regards the legend and devices on the reverse there is hardly any consensus of opinion among scholars. PC Rath[114] opines that the reverse bears the legends *Śrī Rāma* and *Pātanā* and a numerical figure below.

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DC Sircar[115] observes what has been read as *Pātanā* by Rath is really a combination of three symbols, composed of an *aṅkuśa*, a *sa*-like symbol and a *kuṭhāra*, suggesting further that the Parimalgiri hoard of coins may properly be grouped among the so-called Gaṅga *Fanams* mentioned earlier. These coins, which vary in size between 0.41″ and 0.44″ and weigh between 7.37 and 7.42 grains, are strikingly similar to the Gaṅga *Fanams*, but it is worth noting that the figure of a recumbent bull, the principal obverse device of the so-called *Fanams*, is conspicuous by its absence on these coins.

Rath[116] has attributed these coins to the Cauhan King Rāmadeva of Patna on the basis of his suggested reading of the coin legends and of the occurrence on some of these pieces of the year 59, for which period Rāmadeva (c AD 1212-71) is alleged to have ruled. This attribution cannot be considered definite, for first, as suggested by Sircar, the latest date appearing on these coins is the year 24, and secondly it is doubtful whether a petty ruler of Patna like Rāmadeva would have issued gold coins or any coins at all.[117]

Kalacuri Coins

Gold coins of some of the Kalacuri kings of Ratanpur have been discovered at Sonpur[118] in Sambalpur district and Ratanpur[119] in Puri district. Out of the 27 Kalacuri coins from Sonpur, 11 are of Jājalladeva, five are assignable to Pṛthvīdeva and the remaining 11 were issued by Ratnadeva. Of the ten coins of Ratanpur, two are of Ratnadeva and eight belong to Pṛthvīdeva. These coins, which mostly belong to the *dramma* category, weighing between 60 and 62 grains, bear on the obverse the legend, giving the name of the issuer in two lines, while their reverse is occupied by the device of *Gaja-śārdūla*,[120] a lion attacking an elephant on its back.

The discovery of the Kalacuri coins from Orissa has raised some intricate problems, the first of them being the identification of the kings Ratnadeva, Jājalladeva and Pṛthvīdeva mentioned on these coins. Since each of these names was assumed by more than one Kalacuri king of Ratanpur, the identity of the issuers of the Sonpur and Ratanpur hoards of coins has become somewhat difficult.

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But as the coins of these three kings have been found in close association with each other in the Sonpur hoard, which has not yielded the coins of any other Kalacuri king, it may legitimately be presumed that they ruled in succession, with no ruler intervening between them. This line of argument would reveal that Pṛthvīdeva of the coins could hardly have been Pṛthvīdeva III, for, King Jagaddeva ruled in between the reigns of Jājalla II and Ratnadeva III, father and immediate predecessor of Pṛthvīdeva III.

Nor can he be identified with Pṛthvīdeva I, who being a subordinate ruler did not enjoy the right of striking coins. Likewise, Ratnadeva of the coins can hardly be equated with Ratnadeva I, who did not set himself up as an independent chief, or with Ratnadeva III.

In the circumstances Ratnadeva and Pṛthvīdeva of the coins may reasonably be identified with Ratnadeva II and Pṛthvīdeva II respectively. But in identifying Jājalladeva of the coins one does not tread upon any sure ground, for he can be identified equally with Jājalladeva I or Jājalladeva II. Both were independent and powerful monarchs, and the claim of each of them would admirably suit the continuity of the group of three kings ruling in succession, as may be demonstrated with the help of these charts:

Chart 1

Jājalladeva I (c AD 1090-1120)
|
Ratnadeva II (c AD 1120-1140)
|
Pṛthvīdeva II (c AD 1140-1158)

Chart 2

Ratnadeva II
|
Pṛthvīdeva II
|
Jājalladeva II (c AD 1158-1167)

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The paleography of the coin legends does not provide us with any definite clue to the solution of the problem of the identification of Jājalladeva who, to judge from his issue of gold coins, may be said to have enjoyed a fairly prosperous reign. The reign of Jājalladeva I was eventful, being the period when an alliance was concluded with the powerful Candellas and Gāhaḍavālas, and victory was registered over the neighbouring kingdoms, including Andhra, Khimiḍi and Suvarṇapura.

But compared with his earlier namesake, Jājalladeva II was a shadowy figure whose authority was in all likelihood confined to the Chattisgarh region of Madhya Pradesh. The Sonpur and Ratanpur areas of Orissa lay outside the jurisdiction of his authority but Jājalladeva I is said to have defeated King Bhujabala of Suvarṇapura (modern Sonpur) and conquered Khimiḍi *maṇḍala* which has usually been identified with the erstwhile Khimiḍi estate in Ganjam district.

Jājalladeva of the coins may accordingly be equated with Jājalladeva I rather than with Jājalladeva II. It is true that Jājalladeva I was engaged in a series of conflicts throughout his reign, but that does not prove "he had no time to look to internal administration of his dominions or to strike coins in his own name." The case of the great Gupta monarch Samudragupta who waged many more wars in far more distant territories and still had the leisure to issue several types of gold coins is a pointer to this direction.

The identity of Jājalladeva of the coins being now almost fairly established, we may consider the importance of the presence of his and two of his immediate successors' coins at Sonpur and Ratanpur in Orissa. No inscription of the Kalacuris of Ratanpur has yet come to light in Orissa proper. The Ratanpur inscription alludes however to Jājalladeva I's hold over Sonpur in Sambalpur district and Khimiḍi in Ganjam district. Whereas the coins of Jājalladeva I and his two immediate successors have been found at Sonpur, those that have been unearthed in southern Orissa were struck only by the last two kings.

It is hard to believe that the Kalacuri supremacy over Khimiḍi continued long. Khimiḍi was far away from the Kalacuri base in Madhya Pradesh and, further, it was in the

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very heart of the Imperial Gaṅga dominions. There is hardly any definite proof to show that Ratnadeva II and Pṛthvīdeva II had ever exercised their authority over any part of southern Orissa, including Khimiḍi.

It is quite likely that the Kalacuri coins that have been found at Ratanpur travelled to this distant part of Orissa by way of trade and commerce, or they might have been brought there by an unknown migrant from the Kalacuri dominions. Kalacuri rule over Sonpur and the surrounding area lasted longer, at least till the time of Pṛthvīdeva II.

As indicated earlier, the Kalacuri coins discovered in Orissa depict on their reverse the device of *Gaja-śārdūla*. VV Mirashi[121] surmises that the Kalacuri kings adopted this device to proclaim their victory over the Imperial Gaṅgas, described as *Gajapatis*. It is difficult to subscribe to this view notwithstanding the fact that the Kalacuri kings were involved in a protracted conflict with the Imperial Gaṅga King Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga and his son Jaṭeśvara-Kāmārṇava.[122] There is hardly any evidence to show they annexed any part of the Gaṅga dominions.[123]

Jājalladeva I conquered Khimiḍi from the Imperial Gaṅgas, but this proved shortlived, for those who followed him did not succeed in maintaining their hold over Khimiḍi. These coins were primarily meant for circulation in Chattisgarh and the Sonpur region.[124] Chattisgarh was acquired by the Kalacuris of Ratanpur at the expense of the main Kalacuri family of Tripurī while Sonpur was wrested from King Bhujabala.[125] Mirashi's theory on the interpretation of the reverse device of these coins will not sound authentic till a definite proof of the Kalacuri occupation of a part of the Imperial Gaṅga dominions is found.[126]

Padma-Ṭaṅkas

At the same site of Sonpur 27 Yādava gold *Padma-ṭaṅkas*[127] have been discovered, and of them nine belong to Siṅghaṇa, five are assignable to Kaṇhapa or Kṛṣṇa, five are attributed to Mahādeva and three were struck by Rāmachandra. Four gold *Padma-ṭaṅkas*[128] of Siṅghaṇa have been found at Parsadih in the erstwhile Raigarh estate of

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Chattisgarh. They are cupshaped coins with a blank reverse.

The obverse of these coins bears an eight-petalled lotus in the centre, and in four corners four symbols, including two auspicious symbols in the old Kannaḍa script, a conch and the name of the king. These coins are called *Padma-ṭaṅkas* by numismatists on account of the presence of the central figure, although they are not described as such in the contemporary literature and inscriptions. The kings mentioned on these coins are Siṅghaṇa II (c AD 1210-47), Kṛṣṇa (c AD 1247-60), Mahādeva (c AD 1260-71) and Rāmachandra or Śrī Rāma (c AD 1271-1309), all belonging to the Yādava dynasty of Devagiri.

Discovery of Yādava coins at places like Sonpur and Parsadih has sometimes been interpreted by numismatists[129] to indicate the extension of the political hegemony of the kings of Karnatak to western Orissa and Chattisgarh in Madhya Pradesh. The statement of Hemādri that King Siṅghaṇa had captured an elephant corps of Jājalla is taken as corroborative evidence of Siṅghaṇa II's authority over the said area.

AS Altekar[130] identifies the defeated ruler with the Kalacuri King Jājalla III and suggests that his kingdom had passed into the hands of Siṅghaṇa II. AV Narasimha Murthy[131] suggests however that King Jājalla, defeated by Siṅghaṇa II, was the ruler of Srirangapatna of the same name rather than his namesake in Chattisgarh. In view of the geographical proximity of Srirangapatna to the Yādava dominions and the presence of one of his inscriptions at Yelawala in the vicinity of Srirangapatna, Narasimha Murthy's theory on the identification of Jājalla appears more convincing.

Definite proof of Siṅghaṇa II's association with western Orissa and Chattisgarh has still to be found. The coins of the Yādava group of kings discovered in Orissa may possibly be explained in terms of trade and commerce or of migration of one or a group of families from Karnatak to the places of their provenances.[132]

Gajapati Pagodas

The coins, known as the *Gajapati Pagodas*,[133] bearing the

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figure of a standing elephant and an arabesque or floral scroll design respectively on their obverse and reverse, have been attributed by RD Banerji[134] and AC Banerji[135] to the Sūryavaṁśī Gajapati King Kapilendradeva (c AD 1435-67). CJ Brown has advanced the view that these coins were issued by the Gajapati kings who had founded their kingdom in Orissa around the 9th Century AD after having migrated from their homeland in Koṅgudeśa, which has been located in western Karnatak, and Coimbatore and Salem districts of Tamil Nadu.

There are genuine difficulties in the way of attributing the Gajapati *pagodas* to an Orissan king or dynasty. The recorded spots where these coins were found do not include any place in Orissa. Neither the name of Kapilendra nor that of any of his predecessors or successors on the Orissan throne can be read on these coins and, further, no coins which can be definitely assigned to the Sūryavaṁśī Gajapati have as yet been uncovered.

The inscriptions of the Gajapati kings mention some gold coins, including *māḍhas*, and the *Bhakti-Bhāgavata*,[136] composed by Kavidiṇḍima Jīvadevācārya in AD 1510, refers to the circulation of the gold coins of Pratāparudradeva (c AD 1497-1540) in different countries, but no such coins have so far been noticed.

Reference may be made in this context to some other theories, advanced on the attribution of the Gajapati *pagodas*:

1. DC Sircar[137] suggests that some Gajapati *pagodas* were issued by the Western Cālukya kings of Kalyāṇī including Vikramāditya VI (c AD 1076-1126). He further argues that the Gajapati *pagodas*, without any legend, were minted mostly by the temple authorities or the goldsmiths of Karṇāṭa for centuries with royal authority.

2. H Heras[138] contends that the Gajapati *pagodas* were issued by the Vijayanagara King Mallikārjuna who ruled in AD 1446-63.

3. BD Chattopadhyay[139] maintains that these coins, which according to him are paleographically assignable to the 11th-12th Centuries AD, were issued by the Western Gaṅga kings who alone had the "crest of the lusty elephant".

The first of the above three views appears to conform to

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the testimony of Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* which represents King Harṣa (AD 1089-1101) of Kashmir as having issued coins in imitation of those of Karṇāṭa in Dākṣiṇātya.[140] Since Harṣa is known to have struck gold coins, having on their obverse an elephant and on the reverse a legend mentioning his own name, it is natural to presume that the Kashmirian king copied the Gajapati *pagodas* which had been in circulation in Karṇāṭa in his time.

Rājataraṅgiṇī [141] elsewhere describes Kalyāṇapura as the capital of Karṇāṭa where Bilhaṇa[142] is said to have enjoyed royal patronage. All these facts would tend to suggest that Kalhaṇa, in speaking of the Karṇāṭa country, was probably referring to the Western Cālukya dominions which had their headquarters at Kalyāṇī.

The Western Gaṅgas, on the other hand, ruled over a region which lay farther south and were so much constantly harassed by the two neighbouring powers, the Cālukyas and Colas, that they could not possibly think of striking coins in gold in the troubled period of their rule in the 11th-12th Centuries AD.

CP Singh refers to the discovery of 12 copper coins of Pratāparudradeva from Warangal in Andhra Pradesh. These coins, which according to him were issued in the 12th *aṅka* year of the said king, have been attributed by Singh to the Gajapati King Pratāparudradeva (AD 1497-1540). Since the Pratāparudradeva of these coins is expressly described as a Kākatīya king, it is very doubtful whether the Orissan king of the same name had actually issued these coins.

Rāma Ṭaṅkas

Mention may be made of a special type of bronze *Rāma ṭaṅkas* which shows on the obverse the standing figures of Jagannātha, Subhadrā and Balarāma and the Sanskrit legend in modern Nāgrī which reads śrī-śrī Jagannāthasva (s-tra)yī, "the Jagannātha triad". The reverse depicts Rāma and Sītā, seated on a throne and accompanied by Lakṣmaṇa, Bharata, Śatrughna and Hanumān. These coins, which allude to the worship of Jagannātha, were probably issued by the temple authorities of the Jagannātha temple at Puri.

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The coins are undated, but an approximate idea of their chronology may be formed with the help of the devices occurring on them. The appearance of a group of deities on coins probably dates from the time of the Vijayanagara King Kṛṣṇadevarāya when we find the depiction of Śiva and Pārvatī or of Nārāyaṇa and Lakṣmī on the obverse of coins.*

The present coins depict Jagannātha and his two associates Subhadrā and Balarāma on the obverse while Rāma and Sītā are represented on the reverse along with a number of attendants. It is therefore not unlikely that these coins came to be issued with the growing popularity of the Rāma cult at a date not earlier than the 13th Century AD.

The popularity of the images of Rāma and Sītā in Orissa in that century is attested by the *Stotra-Mahodadhi* which says the Vaiṣṇava scholar Narahari-tīrtha obtained the images of Rāma and Sītā from the Gaṅga King Narasiṁha II and presented them to his master Ānanda-tīrtha, the founder of the *Dvaita* or *Mādhava* school of philosophy.[143]

Some Later Coins

A discussion about a few coins issued in the names of some Muslim rulers is now necessary, for on a close study they may be found to be supplementary to the existing literary data in unfolding little known facts of 'medieval' Orissan history. Reference may be made to a unique silver piece of Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Yūzbak who was placed in charge of Gauḍa by Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Bilban of Delhi.

This coin, struck from the mint of Lakhnauti in AH 653 (AD 1255), contains on the margin of the reverse a legend[144] which reads, "struck at Lakhnauti as tribute of Arzbadan and Nadiya in the month of Ramazan of the year six hundred and fifty-three." Arzbadan was previously identified with Burdwan.[145] RD Banerji first proposed to locate the place at Garbardan or Bardhan Kot in North Bengal and subsequently at Umardan or Armardan, described in *Tabaqāt-i-Nasiri*[146] as the capital of the Imperial Gaṅga monarch Narasiṁha I.

*As KD Bajpai (JNSI, XXVII, Part I, p 104) points out, Śiva and Pārvatī, seated on Nandī, also occur on a unique gold coin of Harṣavardhana.

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If the identification of Arzbadan with Umardan or Armardan, as Banerji proposes, be accepted, the coins may provide us with a wealth of information in support of Malik Ikhtiyar-ud-din Yūzbak's expedition to Orissa in the reign of Narasiṁha I, as narrated in *Tabaqāt-i-Nasiri*.

The account reveals that Yūzbak launched a series of military expeditions to Orissa at the time of Narasiṁha I, and in the course of one of them the Gaṅga capital of Umardan or Armardan was stormed and captured. If Arzbadan is the same as Umardan or Armardan, the coin may be supposed to contain an allusion to a victorious campaign undertaken by Yūzbak against the contemporary Orissan King Narasiṁha I around AD 1255, when it was struck.

But a definite conclusion on the issue is extremely difficult at the present state of our knowledge. The statement of *Tabaqāt-i-Nasiri* regarding the capital of Orissa in the 13th Century AD is hardly compatible with the testimony of contemporary inscriptions. What has been described as the capital of the Gaṅga kings might have been, in all probability, an important fort under Narasiṁha I which temporarily fell into the hands of the Muslim adventurer from Bengal.

Mention may be made of a unique coin of Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din Jabāl Shah of the Sur dynasty of Bengal. This coin, which is dated AD 1560, was issued from the mint of Jajpur. It may be held on the basis of this solitary coin that Sultan Ghiyas-ud-din conquered north Orissa as far as Jajpur in Cuttack district from King Mukunda Haricandana and established a mint at the place.

Orissa was conquered by Akbar in AH 982, corresponding to AD 1574, and converted into a Mughal province shortly afterwards. It is doubtful whether Akbar had issued any coin from a mint in Orissa, although it is sometimes argued that some of his rudely executed *dāms* were actually struck at Cuttack.[147] Coins of the Cuttack mint, issued in the names of Jahangir (dated AH 1036), Shahjahan (a coin of the *Ilāhī* type, issued in the third regnal year), Aurangzeb (four rupees between AH 1099 and 1102), Farukhsiyar, Muhammad and Ahmad Shah[148] (24 silver pieces), have come to light.

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Re-examination of the Hypothesis of a Decline in Trade

It is evident from the foregoing discussions that the "medieval" coins discovered in Orissa cannot be dated earlier than the beginning of the 12th Century AD. Indeed, if the coins at our disposal are the sole guide, it is natural to presume that with the passing away of the Nala kings of about the 5th Century AD we enter into a period of numismatic inactivity which lasted till the 12th Century, when the striking of coins in Orissa was revived by Jājalladeva I and Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga.

The picture is however more encouraging in south India where the actual specimens of gold and silver coins from about the 9th or 10th Century AD onwards are available. Paucity or total absence of specimens of metallic coins in Orissa and other parts of India and the supposed dearth of references to them in contemporary inscriptions and literature have been interpreted as a symptom of the decline of trade and commerce, both internal and foreign, in the period from AD 600 to AD 1000, while the abundance of coins of the 11th-12th Centuries, suggested on the basis of actual findings and references to coined money in contemporary epigraphic and literary records, is explained in terms of expansion of commercial activities.[149] This hypothesis, which has found favour with many Indian Marxist historians, may be examined in the context of our knowledge of Orissan history.

As mentioned earlier, Orissa has not yielded any coin which can definitely be assigned to the period from AD 600 to AD 1000, but the use of metallic coins in this period is undoubtedly proved by the testimony of a large number of contemporary and earlier inscriptions. The inscriptions of the Māṭhara, Vāsiṣṭha and Pitṛbhakta kings of south Kaliṅga of about the 4th-5th Centuries AD contain references to *hiraṇyas*[150] which have been taken to mean gold coins.

The Ningondi plates[151] of the Māṭhara King Prabhañjanavarman state that a village was liable to pay an annual rent of 200 *paṇas* (*sāṁvatsarika-kara-paṇāgu śate dave*) which were probably copper coins, each being equivalent to 80 cowries. The Bobbili plates[152] of Acaṇḍavarman refer to a village which was similarly subject to the payment of an annual rent

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of an identical amount (*pradeyaṁ sāṁvatsarikaṁ paṇāguṁ śata-dvayaṁ*).

The Chicacole plates[153] of Anantavarman I of about the beginning of the 8th Century AD speak of a Brahmin donee who was enjoined to pay ten *māṣakas* (*sam-ucito-pratyāyo daśa-māṣakā*), which were small coins of silver, every year as rent for a piece of land granted in his favour. The Chipurupalli plates[154] of Vajrahasta *alias* Anantavarman IV, assignable to the last quarter of the 9th Century AD, refer to a Brahmin named Nārāyaṇa who paid the king an annual rent of five silver coins (*Karaḥ Phālguna-pratipañca-rūpāñ-ca deyaḥ*), called *rūpas*.[155]

The Aṅgul plates of the Bhauma Kara Queen Dharmamahādevī of about the first quarter of the 11th Century AD speak of a Brahmin who had to pay rent of three silver *palas* annually for the enjoyment of a plot of land at a village called Deśāla. The circulation of silver *māṣakas* of five or eight *ratis* in Orissa in the 10th Century AD is attested by the Madras Museum plates[156] of King Narendradhavala. In the inscriptions[157] of the Śulki and Tuṅga kings of about the 11th Century AD mention is made frequently of silver *palas* (*rūpya-pala*) as being in circulation in those days. The Kambakaya plates[158] of Udayāditya of about the same period refer to *māḍas*, gold coins, weighing 40 *ratis*.

The use of silver *palas* is further disclosed by the Ganjam plates[159] of King Pṛthvīvarman which speak of *Bhaṭṭaputra* Śubhaṅkara as paying annually four such coins to the state (*prati-varṣaṁ rūpya-palāni catvārideyaṁ*) as well as by the Jurada grant[160] of Neṭṭabhañja, quoting royal dues for a village as four *rūpya-palas*, and two records[161] of the Somavaṁśī King Mahābhavagupta I Janamejaya, referring to the fixation of annual rent respectively at five and eight *rūpya-palas*.

The term *pala* in the expressions like *rūpya-palāni catvāri*, *pañca-rūpya-palāni*, *rūpyak-aṣṭa-pala* as used in these records has often been interpreted in the sense of a unit of measure, implying the actual quantity of silver to be paid by the donee as annual rent. But that such an interpretation does not stand the test of scrutiny will be amply clear from the following passage of the *Arthaśāstra*:[162] *Suvarṇān-māṣa*

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rato dvi-śato daṇḍaḥ: rūpya-dharaṇān-māṣakam-apaharato dvādaśo-paṇaḥ. This means that if a goldsmith steals while making coins one *māṣa* from the gold coin called *suvarṇa* he will be fined 200 *paṇas*, while his fine will be 12 *paṇas* if he takes away one *māṣa* from a *rūpya-dharaṇa*.

The compound word *rūpya-dharaṇa* is used in this passage in the specific sense of a silver coin, and accordingly the expression *rūpya-pala*, as used in Orissan inscriptions, may reasonably be taken in the sense of a silver coin. Sircar[163] believes that the *rūpya-pala* was not actually a coin but standard currency in "medieval" Orissa. This means that the *rūpya-pala* was an unstamped silver piece which weighed 320 *ratis* but no silver pieces of the same weight have ever been discovered.

S Tripathy[164] asserts that the *rūpya-palas* were the punch-marked coins used as bullion and weighed and calculated in the *pala* standard of weight. One wonders how the demand of a larger number of people could be adequately met by these devalued coins when there was no system to replenish or supplement them, since their issue had practically fallen into disuse from about the 3rd Century AD onwards. The commentary of Kṣīrasvāmin which equates the *rūpya-pala* with the *rājata-śatamāna*, bears testimony, in all probability, to the use of the *rūpya-pala* as a silver coin.

Role of Cowries

There are reasons to believe that in this period cowries constituted an important medium of exchange along with metallic coins. The prominence of cowrie currency in central Orissa in the first half of the 7th Century AD is brought out by the narrative of Hiuen Tsang.[165] A copper plate grant of the Bhauma Kara King Śubhākaradeva II likewise speaks of the continuity of cowries as a recognised medium of exchange in the 10th Century AD. Their use in transacting business is further supported by the discovery of about 25,000 specimens at Sonpur[166] in Sambalpur district.

Thus the hypothesis of paucity of coins in early medieval India does not hold good for Orissa where, to judge from the evidence of epigraphic records, coins of different metals

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and types were current throughout this period. Hence the non-discovery of coins in early "medieval" Orissa is hardly a positive proof of contraction in the circulation of money.

The theory of declining trade and commerce in India in the period from c AD 600 to c AD 1000 is not applicable to Orissa where we have definite evidences of the existence of ports, markets and trade routes, the practice of several arts and crafts, and of the movement of the people from place to place for better prospects.

Evidences in Favour of Trade and Commerce

The existence of a thriving port on the Orissan coast in the first half of the 7th Century AD is proved by what the Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang[167] says about the port of Che-li-ta-lo, Caritra: "On the southeast frontiers of the country, on the borders of the ocean, is the town Charitra (Che-li-ta-lo) about 20 *li* round. Here it is merchants depart for distant countries and strangers come and go and stop here on their way. The walls of the city are strong and lofty. Here are found all sorts of rare and precious articles."

Hiuen Tsang's narrative further suggests that central Orissa, location of the Koṅgoda kingdom, was studded with numerous "strong and high" cities.[168] A copper plate grant[169] of the Bhañja King Neṭṭabhañja, assignable to the last part of the 8th Century AD, informs us that Aṅgulaka, identified with Angul of the present day, was made prosperous by the merchant community, who sold commodities of all descriptions on a large scale. References of harbours (*ghaṭṭa*) are quite frequent in Orissan inscriptions from about the 9th Century AD.

Construction of numerous temples, use of iron beams in temples, making superb images out of stone and discovery of a large number of copper plates point to the advancement of this age in several crafts and industries like temple building, stonework and metallurgy. References to artisans and craftsmen like weavers (*tantuvāya*), milkmen (*gokūṭa*) and brewers (*śauṇḍika*) are to be met with in the Bhauma Kara inscriptions. That some articles were exported from Orissa to other kingdoms in this period is indicated by *Mānasollāsa*, which

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includes the Kaliṅga fabric and rice in the list of varieties for royal use.

Foreign Trade

The remarks of Hiuen Tsang about the port town of Che-li-ta-lo, indicating maritime activity, are supported first by a Chinese text recording the gift of an autographed manuscript of the Buddhist work *Gaṇḍa-vyūha* by an Orissan king to the Chinese Emperor Te-tsong through his envoy Prajñā in AD 795, and secondly by the discovery of a Chinese copper coin attributable to the 8th Century AD at Sirpur.[170]

Location of an international port like Che-li-ta-lo within Orissa proper and the close proximity of the region to Tāmralipti[171] in West Bengal and some other ports near Masulipatam, coupled with its location on the western coast of the Bay of Bengal, paved the way for the development of a regular trade with the countries of Southeast Asia and China. Existence of active intercourse between India and Southeast Asia and the presence of Indian sailors and merchants on Southeast Asian soil in the "medieval" period are proved or implied by the evidence or facts, cited below.

(i) An inscription of about the 5th Century AD in Malaya refers to an Indian captain named Buddhagupta, an inhabitant of Raktamṛttikā.

(ii) Kumāraghoṣa, of Bengal, was appointed royal preceptor by a Śailendra king in the latter half of the 8th Century AD.

(iii) The Nalanda copper plate grant, assignable to the first half of the 9th Century AD, records the erection of a monastery at Nalanda by the Śailendra King Bālaputradeva.

(iv) The statement of the Arab merchant Sulayman (AD 851) that a king of Zābag was held in esteem by the contemporary kings of India is a pointer to the direction of a regular intercourse.

(v) The Śailendra King Cūḍāmaṇivarman constructed a *vihāra* at Nāgapaṭṭana (modern Nagapatam in Tamil Nadu) by AD 1005.

(vi) Rājendra Cola I launched an overseas expedition against Southeast Asia around AD 1025.

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(vii) Virarajendra undertook a military expedition against Kaḍāra sometime between AD 1063 and 1070.

(viii) The Burmese King Kyanzittha (11th Century AD) repaired the temple of Bodh-Gaya which was in ruins.

(ix) Kulottuṅga I received a mission from the contemporary Śailendra king around AD 1090.

(x) In the list of foreigners, who came to Java, as found in the records of Airlangga (11th Century AD) mention is made of Kling, Siṅghala, Draviḍa and Karṇāṭaka which may easily be identified as Orissa, Sri Lanka, Tamil Nadu and Karnatak.

(xi) Regular intercourse between India and Southeast Asia is implied by the account of the Ceylonese chronicle *Cullavaṁsa* which speaks of an invasion of Sri Lanka around AD 1230 by an allied army, comprising the Javanese, Pāṇḍya, Cola and Tamil soldiers.

(xii) The Javanese King Jayanagara who ascended the throne in AD 1309 assumed the name of Sundarapāṇḍya-devādhīśvara Vikramottuṅgadeva, which recalls some association with the Pāṇḍya kingdom in South India.

(xiii) *Nāgara Kṛtāgama*, composed in AD 1365, refers to the people of Jambudvīpa, Karṇāṭaka and Gauḍa as flocking to the Javanese capital Majapahit in ships with merchandise.

RS Sharma[172] does not seem to be unaware of India's commercial intercourse with China and Southeast Asia in the pre-Muslim period but he asserts that this commerce was mainly in the hands of Arabs, who according to him founded "colonies" in all parts of India with the exception of Kashmir. The role of Arab merchants in the export trade of "pre-Muslim" India has apparently been unduly magnified.

Likewise, Sharma's formulation regarding the cessation of foreign trade on the west coast of India does not square with the available materials that have led Maqbul Ahmed[173] to make the following observation:

"It is difficult to say anything about the general effects of this trade on the economy of the respective countries as the details of the imports and the exports and the periodic trade figures and balances have not been worked out. But on the basis of the accounts of the Arab writers of this period it may be assumed that the total balance of trade must have been favourable to India. Firstly, gold was used by Indian

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merchants as means of exchange. Secondly, the volume of India's exports seems to have far exceeded that of the Arab countries to India. Lastly, the goods exported from India were costlier and more valuable than those imported by India." The impression one gets from the above citation is that the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf littorals supplied to India during the early 'medieval' period, among other articles, gold.

To return to Orissa, which is presently the area of our investigation, one has to admit that it was the period when different parts of the region were linked together by means of a network of roads, both inland and riverine. The Santabommali plates[174] of c AD 585 refer to a public road (*rāja-mārga*) while another highway of Kaliṅga (*Kaliṅgamārga*) finds mention in the Kama Nalinakshapur plates[175] of c AD 671. Mention of a waterway is made (*jala-mārga*) in the Andhavaram plates[176] of c AD 714. Frequent mention of ferry (*nadī-tara-sthāna*) in the Bhauma Kara inscriptions would give us an idea how the ninth or tenth century Orissan villages were closely knit together—a process which was largely facilitated by the rivers of Orissa like the Baitarani, Mahanadi, Brahmani, Vansadhara, Languli, Rishikulya and Prachi and their supporting river system, permitting easy accessibility to almost the entire region. Al Bīrūnī, who visited India about AD 1038, speaks of an inland route from Kanauj to Orissa via Allahabad, and thence to Kanchipuram and other distant places in South India. The existence of trade routes, connecting Orissa with different parts of India, is indirectly supported by numerous epigraphic references to the migration of people from the regions like Uttar Pradesh, North and West Bengal, Central India and Bihar to Orissa in the early 'medieval' period.

When all the facts are taken into consideration, it is difficult to subscribe to the view that trade and commerce had slumped in Orissa during the early 'medieval' period. Even if the theory of the paucity of coins in the early 'medieval' period be conceded, we have no reason to believe that there followed a corresponding decline in the volume of trade and commerce. Nonavailability of coins of a particular king, dynasty or period need not be taken as a symptom of economic

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collapse, at least in ancient India when the rulers were not zealous minters and not averse to the continuity of the earlier and foreign coinage in their respective kingdoms. It is significant to note that the post-Gupta period, supposed to be characterised by the absence or paucity of gold and silver coins, witnessed an increasing use of jewellery to judge from sculptures, excavated materials and quantum of Mahmud's booty.

Correlation Between Gold Coins and Flourish of Trade Evaluated

There seems to be little rationale behind Sharma's formulation, overemphasising the correlation between gold coins and flourish of trade. Trade and commerce were in a flourishing state in the middle Gangetic basin by the 6th-5th Centuries BC, but no gold coin of the period has as yet come to light. Should the absence of such coins be construed as positive evidence of the slump of trade and commerce at a time when the process of urbanisation gained momentum?

Gold coins have also not been reported from the Harappan sites which witnessed brisk commercial activity hardly confined to a limited area.[177] Coins came to be invented comparatively late. Are we then to suppose that no flourishing trade and commerce, inland as well as foreign, existed in the pre-currency-prehistoric days? Viewed against this background, coins can hardly be considered either as an essential determinant or a necessary concomitant of trade.

The usefulness of gold coins in foreign trade lies in their use as bullion, and lumps of gold could serve as an adequate, if not better, substitute for gold coins. The practice of barter, exchange of commodities for commodities without the use of money, in foreign trade, which persists even in the last quarter of the 20th Century, could well have been in vogue in early "medieval" India. Such a supposition assumes importance when it is remembered that payment in kind was the only mode of payment in the Indianised states of Southeast Asia, one area where India had developed regular trade.

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REFERENCES

1. This is the view of RC Majumdar (*AIK*, p 64), KC Panigrahi (*BKSO*, p 6), NK Sahu (*HO*, II, p 317) and several other scholars.
2. *IHQ*, XXIX, pp 148 ff; *IE*, pp 297 ff.
3. *HGDHO*, pp 196 ff.
4. The Imperial Gaṅga kings Narasiṁha I and Bhānu I were among the early Orissan rulers to issue inscriptions in Oriya (*EI*, XXXII, pp 325 ff; ibid, XXXIII, pp 41 ff.
5. *EI*, XXVIII, pp 302 ff.
6. Ibid, XXXII, pp 229 ff.
7. *IA*, I, p 355.
8. *EI*, XXXII, pp 275 ff.
9. The statement of RD Banerji (*HO*, I, p 286) that from 'the end of the 4th century the Oriya language predominated in land grants in Orissa and in the 15th century the Oriya script drove out the older proto-Bengali cult of that province' is not wholly accurate.
10. The copper plate grant of Jayanta Siṁha, written in the Oriya script but in the Sanskrit language, was issued in AD 1790 (*SOHAA*, pp 268 ff).
11. The copper plate grant of Ratnakumārī, recording the grant of a village in favour of Divyasiṁha Miśra, was issued in AD 1804 (*SOHAA*, pp 269 ff).
12. *JBORS*, II, pp 419-27; *OUBK*, pp 23-31.
13. *OUBK*, pp 32-39.
14. *HO*, I, p 248.
15. Ibid, p 255.
16. *OHRJ*, II, Nos III and IV, p 54.
17. Such surnames are Mahāpātra, Rāutarāya, Choṭarāya, Paṭṭanāyaka, Pradhāna, Pātra, Rājaguru, Sāmantarāya, Sāmanta, Gaḍanāyaka, Nāyaka, Senāpati, Praharāja and the like.
18. *JBORS*, XVI, p 78.
19. *OHRJ*, I, No IV, p 269. An early epigraphic reference to the institution of *devadāsīs* in Orissa is found in the Brahmeśvara temple inscription at Bhubaneswar, recording the appointment of dancing girls in the Śiva temple by Queen Kolāvatī, mother of the Somavaṁśī King Udyatakeśarī (*IO*, IV, p 252). There is also epigraphic evidence in support of the presence of the *devadāsīs* in the temple of Srikurmam in Srikakulam district of Andhra Pradesh in the reign of the Gaṅga King Anantavarman Vajrahasta around the middle of the 11th Century AD Thomas Donaldson (*Kalādarśana*, p 37) suggests that there is an actual depiction of a dancing girl in an image on the southern side of the *jagamohana* of the Brahmeśvara temple, above the balusters. It is not unlikely that the institution of *devadāsīs* was of South Indian inspiration. That *devadāsīs* for different Orissan temples were sometimes recruited from South India even in later centuries is evidenced by a 15th Century inscription of King Kapilendradeva, recording the presence of Telugu dancers in the Jagannātha temple at Puri (*HO*, I, p 301).
20. *Akṣaya-nīvī* or *nīvī* was a permanent endowment which

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could not be withdrawn and whose interest alone could be enjoyed (*SI*, p 152). According to the *nīvī-dharma* the gift of land was to be maintained perpetually by the donee, who was entitled to the use of the income accruing from the land donated in his favour. The donee did not have the right to destroy the perpetuity of the grant by bestowal or sale in favour of another person. The *bhūmi-cchidra-nyāya* or *bhūmi - cchidra - pidhāna - nyāya* speaks of a custom "according to which a person who brings a piece of fallow or jungle land under cultivation for the first time was allowed to enjoy it without paying rent" (*IE*, p 397). The custom was based on the "principle that the hunted deer belonged to him who hit it first" (ibid).

21. *EI*, XXVIII, pp 235 ff.
22. Ibid, p 256.
23. *IA*, XIII, pp 120-23.
24. *JBORS*, XVII, pp 1 ff.
25. *JAHRS*, XI, pp 51 ff; *EI*, XXVIII, pp 205-11 (*ṣaṭ-triṁśad - āvedanaka-rahitaṁ nirupādhikaṁ*).
26. *HO*, I, p 275.
27. *EI*, XXIX, pp 105-08.
28. Ibid, p 108.
29. *JASB*, LXIV, part I, pp 151-52; *EI*, XXVIII, pp 302 ff.
30. The use of the *aṅka* reckoning in Orissan epigraphs is known from the time of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga. According to the rule, 1 and all figures ending in 0 and 6 (except 10) should be deducted from the *aṅka* years to get the number of the actual years of the reign of a king.
31. In some records of the Kannada area mention is made of a dignitary called *Mahāpasāyita*, who, according to DC Sircar (*IE*, p 354), was a *Jāgīrdār* of a particular type.
32. In the early 'medieval' records of Bengal mention is made of a small administrative unit, called *bhāga*. The *Bhāgaloka* might have been an official placed in charge of a *bhāga*.
33. *SII*, VI, No 801.
34. *EI*, XXVIII, p 182. This is known from the Haṁseśvara inscription (ibid, pp 81-82).
35. *JBORS*, II, p 52.
36. *IO*, IV, pp 219-20.
37. *JBORS*, II, p 50.
38. *EI*, XXXI, pp 250 ff.
39. Ibid, XXVIII, p 242. The corresponding passage of the Nagari plates, mentioning the date of Kāmārṇava's accession to the throne is read as *Nand-arttu-vyoma-citra(candra)-pramita-śaka-samā - vyāpta-kāle* (ibid., p 252). But the earlier known inscriptions of the Imperial Gaṅga kings give the date as *Veda-ṛtu-vyoma-candra*, and have led scholars to assume that the coronation of Kāmārṇava took place in Śaka 1064, possibly as a regent under his aged father Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga. The discovery of the Nagari plates has, on the other hand, led to the advancement of the theory that Kāmārṇava ascended the throne in Śaka 1069. The fact that the latest recorded date found in the epigraphs of Coḍagaṅga's time is Śaka 1069 and that the earliest record of Kāmārṇava is dated in Śaka 1070 would support the version of the Nagari plates.

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40. *EI*, XXVIII, p 251.
41. *Mādalā Pāñji* edited by AB Mahanti, p 31.
42. For the different views on the *Gaṅga* era see *HGDHO*, pp 230 ff.
43. *JBORS*, II, p 55.
44. *IO*, IV, p 220.
45. *IO*, I, part II, p 18.
46. Ibid, p 129.
47. *IO*, II, p 45. Culla was a *Rahasiniyukta* (*IO*, I, part II, p 91) and *Rahasy-ādhikṛta* (ibid, p 87).
48. *IO*, I, part II, p 22.
49. Ibid, p 16.
50. *IO*, II, p 55.
51. *IO*, IV, p 280.
52. *IO*, I, part II, p 232.
53. *IO*, IV, p 216.
54. *IO*, I, part II, p 221.
55. *EI*, XXVIII, p 216.
56. *IO*, IV, p 221.
57. Ibid, p 123.
58. *IO*, V, part I, p 56.
59. Ibid, p 292.
60. *IO*, IV, p 103.
61. Ibid, p 5.
62. *IO*, I, part II, p 176.
63. The engraver of the Parlakimedi plates of Vajrahasta was named Naṅkacyamācari (*IO*, II, p 169). The goldsmith caste in Ganjam and Srikakulam districts still use the title *ācārī*, and as such, the engraver appears to have been a goldsmith.
64. *IO*, IV, p 49.
65. *IO*, II, p 277. The engraver of the Nibinna charter of Mahāśivagupta Yayāti (*IO*, IV, p 188) was a *Taṭhakāra* (worker in bell metal).
66. *IO*, II, p 169.
67. *IO*, V, p 11.
68. *IO*, II, p 284.
69. *IO*, I, part II, p 91.
70. Ibid.
71. *IO*, I, part II, pp 184, 189.
72. *EI*, XXVIII, p 308.
73. Instances of the same person composing and engraving an inscription are rare. One such instance is supplied by the Tirlingi (*IO*, II, p 2) plate where Vinayacandra is said to have composed and engraved the charter (*likhitam - utkirṇañ - c-edaṁ Bhānucandrasya sūnunā Vinayacandreṇ-eti*).
74. T Bhattacharya (*CIA*, p 287) draws a sharp distinction between the Drāviḍa and Dravidian styles, using Drāviḍa to refer to the earlier non-Aryan architecture, "which was not limited to South India", and Dravidian, in the sense of South Indian architecture, posterior to the 6th Century AD. But the terms Drāviḍa and Dravidian are often used as synonyms in the sense of the South, approximately the region between the river Kṛṣṇā and Cape Comorin (*SE*, p 533).
75. *SOHAA*, p 310. This statement does not apply to the rock-cut mode of architecture which altogether disappeared around the 12th Century AD, if not at a still earlier date.
76. A much earlier date for the emergence of the *nāṭa-mandira* in Orissan architecture is suggested by Thomas Donaldson (*Kalādarśana*, New Delhi, 1981, pp 35-46). The earliest reference to the construction of the *bhoga-maṇḍapa* occurs in the *Mādalā Pāñji* which credits the Gajapati King Puruṣottamadeva with the erection of the *bhoga-maṇḍapa* of the Jagannātha temple at Puri.
77. T Bhattacharya (*CIA*, p 286)

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has placed the beginnings in the early centuries of the 1st Millennium BC. It is sometimes argued that the formative stage in the process of temple building was reached around the 4th Century AD, when simple flat-roofed square structures are supposed to have first emerged (*SE*, p 532). The undoubted occurrence, in relief, of the storeyed structures on the Audumbara coins of about the 1st Century AD from the Kangra Valley in Himachal Pradesh militates against such a presumption.

78. The Sun temple, called the Black Pagoda after its darkish colour seen from a distance, was built in the reign of the Imperial Gaṅga monarch Narasiṁha I (c AD 1238-64). The monolithic column *aruṇa-stambha* which now stands on the eastern entrance of the Jagannātha temple at Puri was originally erected in front of the *jaga-mohana* of the Sun temple.
79. If the height of the *mukha-sālā* is an indication, the *baḍa-deul* of Konarak may be supposed to be the tallest of all North Indian temples.
80. The temples in Orissa are so numerous that there does not seem to be any exaggeration in the statement that "there are perhaps more temples now in Orissa than in all the rest of Hindustān put together."
81. *CIA*, p 226.
82. T Bhattacharya (*CIA*, p 322) has shown that the term *citra* which nowadays is used only for painting meant in early times sculpture as well.
83. According to Jain iconographical texts, a Tīrthaṅkara should have long arms, hanging up to the knee, *śrīvatsa* symbol and a youthful nude body, flanked by a yakṣa and yakṣiṇī, a particular *kevala-vṛkṣa* under which he attained supreme knowledge, one of the *aṣṭapratihāryas*, comprising heavenly tree, throne, umbrella, nimbus, drum, flowering blossoms, chouris and musical instruments and respective cognisance, *lāñchana*.
84. Amitābha is one of the five Dhyānī Buddhas, others being Akṣobhya, Vairocana, Amoghasiddhi and Ratnasambhava. Vairahasta is sometimes regarded as the sixth Dhyānī Buddha.
85. Maitreya is represented in Buddhist mythology and pantheon as the Buddha to be and also as a Bodhisattva.
86. Originally a protective deity (derived from the root *tar* which means to save or protect), she was adopted in both the Brahmanical and Buddhist pantheons in the early centuries of the Christian era and became the most important Buddhist goddess, being recognised as the consort of Avalokiteśvara.
87. *SPRHRC*, p 260.
88. This is however applicable to the *deul* and *jaga-mohana* of the Liṅgarāja which are generally assigned to about AD 1100 (*SE*, p 550) for the two ancillary halls of the *nāṭa-maṇḍapa* and *bhoga-maṇḍapa* were definitely added later, although there is no consensus among scholars as regards the interval of time between the

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commencement of construction and final completion. SK Saraswati (*SE*, p 548) thinks of an interval of a century unlike PK Acharya (*SOHAA*, pp 309-11) who suggests a much wider chronological gap. The *deul* of the Liṅgarāja is nearly 160 feet in height and its *jagamohana* is a little over 100 feet.

89. The Matsya Purāṇa (chapter 259) gives a detailed description of the *nṛtya-mūrtis* of Śiva with four, eight, ten or 16 hands. The images of four-handed Naṭarāja occur on the Paraśurāmeśvara temple (upper medallion of the *caitya* arch at the base of the *rāhā* of the *gaṇḍi* on the southern side of the *baḍa-deul*; right side *kanikā* in the *jāṅgha* section on the eastern side of the *baḍa-deul* and right side *kanikā* in the *jāṅgha* section on the northern side of the *baḍa-deul*), a six-handed Naṭarāja is depicted on the Paramaguru temple, Naṭarāja with eight hands is carved on the Paraśurāmeśvara (upper medallion of the *caitya* arch at the base of the *rāhā* on the northern face of the *gaṇḍi*), Pātāleśvara and Śiśireśvara, figures of Naṭarāja with ten hands are made on the Siṁhanātha and Paraśurāmeśvara (*sukanāsa*), while Naṭarāja with 12 hands are seen on the Bharateśvara (left side *kanikā* niche on the southern face of the *bāḍa*; *sukanāsa*) and the Mārkaṇḍeśvara temple (*JAIH*, XII (1978-79), pp 94-96).

90. Representations of Lakuleśa are found on the *bāḍa* of the *baḍa-deul* of the Bhṛṅgeśvara, southern wall of the *mukha-sālā* of the Śiśireśvara, *caitya* gables on the facade of the Paraśurāmeśvara and the Bharateśvara, *gaṇḍi* of the Śiśireśvara, *Lakṣmīdvāra* of the Paramaguru. The Śaiva saint shown either in *vaddha-padmāsana* or in the *utkuṭikāsana* is sometimes depicted as two-handed, and occasionally, evidently with a view to deifying the Pāśupata teacher, as four-handed.

91. In the *ardha-nārīśvara* form Śiva and Umā merge into one body, the right half betraying male and the left half female features. The Kālikā Purāṇa (chapter 45) relates the story of the merger of Śiva and Śakti into one composite body.

92. This does not mean that Vaiṣṇavism was altogether bereft of royal patronage. The Bhauma Kara Queen Tribhubana Mahādevī was a Parama-vaiṣṇavī. Some of the Bhañja rulers also embraced Vaiṣṇavism. But the vast majority of the Orissan kings in the pre-Coḍagaṅga period were followers of Śaivism.

93. Thomas Donaldson, *op cit*, p 39.

94. The Saivite temple of Cateśvara at Kisenpur in Cuttack district, erected in the first half of the 13th Century AD, for example, contains sculptures illustrating various Vaiṣṇava themes.

95. *ARB*, p 214.

96. Debala Mitra, *Bhubaneswar* (New Delhi, 1966), p 10.

97. *ASI*, *AR* (1925-26), pp 150-51.

98. The importance of Konarak as a place of pilgrimage for Saura worshippers is attested by the Brahma (chapter XXVIII) and

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Śāmba Purāṇas while the Śiva, Brahma and Ekāmra Purāṇas highlight the importance of Bhubaneswar as a Saivite place.

99. *EI*, XXX, p 23.
100. *Ratha-yātrā* is a festive procession of temple idols in a *ratha* (chariot) through the main streets of the town or to a particular sacred spot near the temple. These festive processions of gods, which seem to be closely connected with fertility cults, often accompanied by promiscuous behaviour and revelries, were widely prevalent in the Mediterranean and West Asian countries (GS Ghurye, *Religious Consciousness*, p 25; J Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, II, p 130).
101. For a similar role of South Indian temples see *The Studies in Ancient Tamil Law and Society* (Madras, 1978) by R Nagaswamy.
102. They include private individuals, local and village assemblies (prominent in the case of Tamil Nadu and Karnatak) and merchant guilds who played not an insignificant role in the growth, development and maintenance of temple building all over India. A conch shell worker is mentioned as the founder of a temple (*Ahicchatraka-śaṁkhakāra-maṭha*) in Asanapat Naṭarāja image inscription of Śatrubhañja of about the 6th Century AD (*JAIH*, XII (1978-79), pp 126-31).
103. The *mithuna* motifs first make their appearance in 7th-8th Century temples in Bhubaneswar like the Śatrughneśvara. The story of the *mithuna* sculptures in Orissa would go further back if an earlier date is suggested for the Śatrughneśvara temple, which is sometimes regarded as being contemporaneous with the Daśāvatāra temple at Deogarh (*SE*, p 538).
104. *ESI*, pp 7-8.
105. Ibid, pp 112 ff.
106. *IA*, XXV, p 322; *JASB* (1897), pp 144-45; *JAHRS*, V, pp 249-50; *JNSI*, XIV, pp 81-84; ibid, XXI, p 77.
107. *JASB* (1897), p 145.
108. *IA*, XXV, p 322.
109. LP Pandey (*JAHRS*, III, pp 181-82) reports the discovery from Balpur in Bilaspur district of a few gold and silver coins, containing, according to him, the letters *sa* and *ra*, which he has attributed to the Keśari kings of Orissa and Dakṣiṇa Kosala. The ascription is doubtful.
110. *JNSI*, VIII, p 112.
111. *AI*, XXV, p 322.
112. R Subba Rao (*JAHRS*, V, pp 249-50) reports the discovery of the Gaṅga *fanams* at Kalingapattanam, Mukhalingam, etc. in Srikakulam district. Sonpur in Sambalpur district has yielded 49 Gaṅga *fanams* (*JNSI*, XIII, pp 192-93). 12 *fanams* have been discovered in a Vaiṣṇava temple of Puri (*JNSI*, XLII, parts 1-2, p 31).
113. *JNSI*, V, 61.
114. Ibid.
115. *SIN*, p 248.
116. *JNSI*, V, p 61.
117. The reading *Śrī-Rāma*, as suggested by PC Rath, is not free from doubt. DC Sircar (*SIN*, p 251) assigns these coins to a date not much earlier than the

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15th Century AD.

118. *JNSI*, XIII, pp 199-201.
119. Ibid, XVII, part 2, pp 58-63.
120. The correct interpretation of the reverse device had long been a problem for numismatists. Smith (*IMG*, I, p 254) took it to be a rampant lion; Mirashi (*JSNI*, III, p 28) originally identified it as a horse but later on suggested it was a Gaja-Śārdūla; Hoernle held the symbol to be Hanumān, but subsequently suggested it was an elephant, horse or a bull. The credit for advancing the correct interpretation of the reverse device first belongs to BB Nath (*JNSI*, XIII, p 199).
121. *JNSI*, XV, p 210.
122. Kāmārṇava, the son of Anantavarman Coḍagaṅga, is called Jaṭeśvara in one inscription at Mukhalingam.
123. The suggestion of Nath (*JNSI*, XV, p 126) that the Cedis conquered Sonpur from the Imperial Gaṅgas is hardly compatible with the epigraphic evidence which speaks of Bhujabala as the deposed king of Sonpur.
124. A chemical analysis conducted by SK Maity (*JNSI*, XII, pp 273-75) has shown that there was a steady and gradual increase in the gold content of the coins of these Kalacuri kings of Tuṁmāṇa. Thus whereas the average percentage of pure gold of the coins of Jājalladeva I is 75.3 grains, the same for those of Ratnadeva II and Pṛthvīdeva II measures 84.8 and 92.5 grains respectively. The gradual increase of the gold content of the coins might indicate a higher degree of stability in the economic field at the time of the last two kings, as compared to the preceding reign, which was marked by incessant wars.
125. This Bhujabala might have been an as yet unknown king of the Sonpur region or, as observed by Sircar (*SE*, p 218), he was the same as the Somavaṁśī Kumāra Someśvara, king of Paścima-Laṅkā, who issued the Kelga plates from Suvarṇapura.
126. Nath (*JNSI*, XIII, p 201) reads the letters *ta* and *mā* on the reverse of some of the Kalacuri coins from Sonpur and interprets them as the initials of the names of Tuṁmāṇa and Malhar. A great deal of uncertainty hangs over the reading and interpretation of the two letters, as suggested by Nath.
127. The attribution of the coins, known as *Padma-ṭaṅkas*, had long been a subject of keen controversy among numismatists for the reason that all the earliest known coins of this series were not inscribed. Eliot (*CSI*, p 56) was of the opinion that these coins were issued by the Kadamba kings, a theory subsequently supported by Rapson (*IC*, p 32), who however had a different notion about the chronology of the Kadamba kings. SR Aiyangar (*JASB* (1925), *NS*, No 250, p 6) first advanced the theory that the *Padma-ṭaṅkas* were issued by the Yādava kings of Devagiri who flourished in the 13th Century AD. The undoubted occurrence of the names of four Yādava kings like Siṅghaṇa II, Kṛṣṇa, Mahādeva and Rāmachandra has practically

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set at rest the controversies over the attribution of these coins. The *Padma-ṭaṅkas* of Bhillama V have also been discovered. They have been found in different places in Maharashtra, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Karnatak and Andhra Pradesh.

128. *JNSI*, VIII, pp 147 ff.
129. Ibid, p 151.
130. Nath (*JNSI*, XV, p 127) likewise holds that the discovery of these coins proves the continuity of Yādava rule in the Sonpur region from the time of Siṅghaṇa II down to the reign of Rāmachandra.
131. *CK*, p 115.
132. A *mohur* of Nasir-ud-din Mahmud I (AD 1246-66) has been found along with four *Padma-ṭaṅkas* of Siṅghaṇa II at Parsadih. This has led AS Altekar (*JNSI*, VIII, p 147) to assume that the Chattisgarh area was conquered by the Sultan of Delhi around the middle of the 13th Century AD. Since gold coins are migratory in nature, no positive conclusion can be deduced on the basis of a single stray specimen of Nasir-ud-din.
133. The origin of the term *pagoda* is obscure. It was first applied by the Portuguese to Hindu temples, and subsequently to coins, housing an idol.
134. *HO*, I, p 304.
135. *JNSI*, VII, p 113.
136. *Nava Bhārata* (in Oriya), VI, No 6, p 295; *Utkal University Souvenir* (1948), p 113.
137. *SIC*, pp 245-46.
138. *JASB* (1933), *NS*, No XLIV, pp 17-22.
139. *CCSSI*, p 45.
140. VII, 926.
141. VII, 1123-24.
142. VII, 935-37.
143. *HO*, I, pp 270-71.
144. *CCIM*, II, part 2, p 246.
145. *JASB* (1881), part I, p 61.
146. *Tabaqāt-i-Nasiri*, Eng trans, p 765, note 4.
147. *CCIM*, III, LVIII.
148. Ibid.
149. *IF*, p 248. BP Majumdar (*SEHNI*, p 219) also speaks of a great paucity of coined money in Orissa. In advancing his formulations with regard to the paucity of coins in early 'medieval' India, RS Sharma does not appear to have followed a uniform line of reasoning. In the first edition of his book on Indian feudalism he speaks of the dearth of references to, and discovery of, coined money in this period. About a decade later he talks of the "practical absence of gold coins" in the country and is silent over the bearing of the epigraphic and literary documents upon the subject. "In Bengal", he says, "no coin issued by any Hindu prince has been reported between the 7th and 15th centuries" (*IHR*, I, No I, p 5). Elsewhere (ibid, No II, p 328) he asserts that "we cannot identify with confidence any actual coin issued by a Hindu prince of Bengal from the 8th to the 15th century except of a few debased silver and low-quality copper coins of the early Pāla kings." He surmises, on the basis of a chart of the pure gold content of the coins of successive Gupta kings prepared by SK Maity, that the shortage of gold started

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right in the 4th Century, and yet, strangely enough, he places the beginning of the shrinkage of trade in AD 600. It is held that in manufacturing gold coins Indians had to depend on the import of gold from outside. It is true that India imported gold from outside (HP Chakraborti, *Trade and Commerce of Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1966), p 271) but it may be noted at the same time that objects of gold like beads, pendants, armlets, brooches, needles that have been unearthed in the Indus region indicate the use of unrefined electrum, and as such much of the Indus gold seems to have originated from the reefs of Karnatak. The importance of Karnatak as a gold-producing area and the quantum of gold accumulated in the course of centuries should be properly considered before one speaks of the dearth of yellow metal in the early 'medieval' period. RS Sharma's observation about the issue of a few debased and low-quality copper coins by some early Pāla kings is not based on positive evidence, for till now no coins have been discovered which can definitely be attributed to these rulers. Sharma's assertion about the total absence of coins in Bengal from the 7th or 8th to the 15th Century AD is likewise incompatible with the discovery from Southeast Bengal of a large number of gold and silver coins bearing the names or titles of issuers like Pṛthubala, Sudhanyāditya, Lalitakara, Dharmavijaya and probably Abhinavamṛgāṅka and assignable to the later half of the 7th and following centuries (*Indian Museum Bulletin*, XIV, Nos 1-2, p 69).

150. Sircar takes *hiraṇya* to be the royal share of certain crops, paid in gold coins. UN Ghosal interprets it as a tax in cash, levied on special crops as distinguished from the tax in kind charged on ordinary crops (*HRS*, p 62). Both Senart (*EI*, VII, pp 61-62) and Kielhorn (ibid, p 160) have taken the term in the sense of a tax paid in coins.
151. *IO*, I, II, p 45.
152. Ibid, p 25.
153. *IO*, II, p 164.
154. *EI*, XXXI, pp 312-14.
155. Although the word *rūpa* is usually used in the sense of a mark or figure, the term is employed in *Arthaśāstra* in the sense of a coin (cf *rūpya-rūpa* and *tāmra-rūpa*). While commenting on *Amarakoṣa* Kṣīrasvāmin applies the term *rūpaka* to silver coins which are also so named in the *Bṛhat-Saṁhitā* (81, 12-13) and the Baigram plate.
156. *JAS*, Letters, XVIII (1952), No I, p 49.
157. *EI*, XXVII, p 47.
158. Ibid, XXX, part III, p 94.
159. Ibid, IV, pp 198-201.
160. Ibid, XXIV, pp 15-20.
161. *EI*, III, pp 340-44; *JPASB* (1918), pp 12-13.
162. Chapter 78.
163. *SIC*, pp 52-53.
164. *JNSI*, XLIII, p 38.
165. It is worth noting that Fa-hien came across only cowries in the markets of Madhyadeśa at the time of Candragupta II

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Vikramāditya.

166. *JNSI*, XIII, p 92. Thomas Bowry, who visited Orissa in the later half of the 17th Century AD, noted cowries as the only money known to rural folk (*JNSI*, XXVIII, p 129). The use of cowries as money tokens continued in Orissa till AD 1803, when their circulation was officially suspended.
167. *BRWW*, IV, p 411.
168. Ibid, p 412.
169. *JBORS*, XVII, p 114.
170. *OHRJ*, II, p 104.
171. The existence of Tāmralipti as a flourishing port till at least the 8th Century AD is proved by the testimony of the Dudhpani inscription of Udayamāna recording the visit of merchants from distant places like Ayodhyā to this port for trade (*HAB*, p 347).
172. *IHR*, I, No 1, p 9.
173. *Indo-Arab Relations*, pp 86-7. The citation occurs in *IHR*, I, No II, p 442.
174. *IO*, II, p 30.
175. Ibid, p 321.
176. Ibid, p 330.
177. Reference may be made to the find of a male head, made of stone, in a presumably Harappan context at Dabarkot in northern Baluchistan which compares favourably with the Early Dynastic Sumerian sculpture of the Diyala region and may be believed to have been either an import from Sumer or a local prototype of a Sumerian Early Dynastic original (*AIH*, I, parts 1-2, pp 80-81). Again, on a dark grey steatite bowl from Mesopotamia assignable to c 2700 BC is shown a typically Indian humped bull. This stray Mesopotamian find "constitutes in itself evidence of a pre-Sargonic contact between India and Mesopotamia" (ibid, p 80). These two pieces of data, besides others, considered in unison, would imply a close maritime contact between India and the Arab world in the 3rd and 2nd Millennium BC.

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Chapter 3

SOURCES OF THE HISTORY OF HARYANA

Literary Evidence

In dealing with the sources of early Indian history HC Raychaudhuri[1] observes: "No Thucydides or Tacitus has left for posterity a genuine history of ancient India. But the patient investigations of numerous scholars and archeologists have opened up rich stores of material for the reconstruction of the ancient history of our country." This observation of the distinguished historian holds remarkably good for the state of Haryana, as it applies with considerable justification to the rest of the Indian subcontinent barring Jammu and Kashmir which has produced in Kalhaṇa a chronicler of outstanding merit.

To start with literary evidence, AB Keith[2] has drawn the attention of scholars to a significant passage in the Ṛgveda which expressly describes the Puru Kings Devaśravas and Devavāta, as dwelling on the banks of the Sarasvatī,[3] Dṛṣadvatī and Āpayā. The last-named river has been identified with a rivulet near modern Thanesar.

If the passage is not dismissed as spurious and the identification of the Āpayā accepted, it may legitimately be surmised that the illustrious Puru tribe[4a] was associated at a period of their early history with the region which has come to be designated in modern times as Haryana. The Ṛgveda likewise mentions the lake Śaryaṇāvant and the place Pastyāvant which scholars have located not far off from Thanesar and Patiala respectively.

The Brāhmaṇas and the Upaniṣads unambiguously reveal that by the time these works were being composed the cradle

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of Aryan civilisation had shifted from the land between the rivers Sarasvatī and Dṛṣadvatī to Kurukṣetra, which included Haryana as well as Delhi and a large tract of the upper Gangetic Doab.

The people and the kings or chieftains of this realm have been eulogised as models for the Aryans. The Kurus uttered the best speech, observed sacrifices with remarkable perfection, their Brāhmaṇas were renowned for their erudition, their monarchs were examples for their counterparts in other kingdoms, performing *Rājasūya*, sacrifice of royal consecration, embarking upon a career of *digvijaya* with the advent of the dewy season and returning home with the approach of summer.

If the authenticity of the later Vedic texts is unimpeachable, the royal residence of the Kurus was located in the city of Āsandīvat, now identified with Nāgasāhvaya or Hastināpura or more probably Asandh in the neighbourhood of Chitang.[4b]

The great epic has proved to be a source of immense value for fuller details about the Kuru kings. The genealogy of the Kuru royal family is mentioned twice in the Mahābhārata, but these accounts are far from being identical. The value of the epic account is further diminished by the fact, as pointed out by FE Pargiter,[5] that queens are sometimes erroneously turned into kings.

But it cannot escape notice that among the Kuru rulers referred to in the genealogical portions of the Mahābhārata, the names of Purūravas Aila, Āyu, Yayāti Nahusya, Pūru, Bharata Dauḥṣanti Saudyumni, Ajamīḍha, Ṛkṣa, Saṁvaraṇa, Kuru, Uccaiśravas, Pratīpa Prātisatvana or Prātisutvana, Balhika Prātipīya, Śaṁtanu and Dhṛtarāṣṭra Vicitravīrya are found in Vedic literature as well.

As Raychaudhuri[6] observes aright: "The occurrence of these names in Vedic texts probably proves their historicity, but it is difficult to say how far the epic account of their relations with one another or with Parīkshit, and the traditional order of succession, are reliable. Some kings may not have been connected with the Kurus at all. Others like Uccaiśravas Kaupayeya, Balhika Prātipīya and Śaṁtanu were undoubtedly of the same race (Kauravyas) as Parīkshit."

Leaving aside the genealogical tables, when one turns to

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the epic description of the reigns of individual monarchs one is delighted to find that the account is not only comprehensive at times but also not unoften corroborated by other sources. A passage[7] of the Mahābhārata, for example, says that Janamejaya, son of Parīkṣit, and his three brothers, Śrautasena, Ugrasena and Bhīmasena, once attended a sacrifice which was performed at Kurukṣetra for a long time (*Janamejayaḥ Pārīkṣitaḥ saha bhrātṛbhiḥ Kurukṣetre dīrgha-satramupāste| tasya bhrātaras-trayaḥ Śrautasena Ugrasena Bhīmasena iti||*). This is in perfect agreement with the testimony of the Viṣṇu Purāṇa[8] which contains the verse:

Y - oyaṁ sāmpratam - avanīpatiḥ tasy - āpi Janamejaya-Śrautasena - Ugrasena - Bhīmasenaḥ putrāś - catvāro bhaviṣyanti|

The Mahābhārata[9] mentions the warlike Mattamayūrakas, as inhabiting the tract called Rohitaka, which, as we are further told, abounded in cows, horses, riches and paddy of various kinds, and was in the perpetual enjoyment of the blessings of the war god Kārttikeya (*tato bahuvidhaṁ ramyaṁ gav-āśva-dhana-dhānyavat | Kārttikeyasya dayitaṁ Rohitakamupādravat| tatra yuddhaṁ mahac - cāsic - chūrair - Mattamayūrakaiḥ||*). Rohitaka[10] of the Mahābhārata appears to be the same as Rohtak in Haryana, and the epic passage may probably be interpreted as alluding to the flourishing economic resources of the region. The account of the Mahābhārata is not less valuable for knowing the religious condition of the region although it is impossible to ascertain the chronological context. "A study of the descriptions of the *tīrthas* on the Sarasvatī and adjacent areas we find in the Mahābhārata", as Indras[11] points out, "shows that out of some 48 shrines 13 were dedicated to Brahmā, 11 to the manes, eight to Viṣṇu (incarnations of boar and dwarf), seven to Śiva (including one of Sthānu Śiva), two Kārttikeya, two Varuṇa, two Sūrya, one Marut, two Agni, one Śrī, two Gāṇapatyas and three to the Mother goddess." Some of these *tīrthas* no doubt lay beyond Haryana for the reason that the Sarasvatī passed through other territories as well.

The illustrious Sanskrit grammarian Pāṇini[12] mentions the

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Yaudheyas as constituting an *Āyudha-Jīvī-saṁgha*, a tribal republican organisation, who lived by the profession of arms (*āyudhena jīvati*). The *Saṁghavṛttam* chapter of the *Arthaśāstra* contains the passage *Licchivika-Vṛjika-Mallaka-Madraka-Kukura-Kuru-Pañcālādayo rājaśabdo-pajīvinaḥ* which means that the corporation of the Kurus, along with those of the Licchavis and others, lived by the title Rājā in the 5th or 4th Century BC, the approximate date of Pāṇini.

The *Dharmasūtra* of Baudhāyana divides India into three distinct ethnic or cultural zones: the purest of them is Āryāvarta,[13] described as lying to the east of the place where the Sarasvatī disappears; to the west of Kālakavana, identified with a tract in the vicinity of Allahabad; to the north of Pāripātra, identified with the western Vindhyas and to the south of the Himalayas (*prāg-Adarśanād-apratyak-Kālakavanād-dakṣiṇena Himavantam-udaka-Pāriyātram-etad-Āryāvartaṁ tasmin ya ācāraḥ sa pramāṇam//*).

The Sarasvatī is known to have disappeared in the present district of Hissar. The state of Haryana has accordingly to be located in Āryāvarta and the customs and practices prevalent in it were regarded as unblemished. The *Manusaṁhitā*[14] calls Āryāvarta of the *Baudhāyana Dharmasūtra* Madhyadeśa, which it defines as stretching from the Himalayas in the north to the Vindhyas in the south and from Vinaśana[15] in the west to Prayāga in the east (*Himavad-Vindhyayormadhyaṁ yat prāg-Vinaśanād-api/ pratyag-eva Prayāgāc-ca Madhyadeśaḥ prakīrtitaḥ//*).

It is evident that the Brahmanical definition of Āryāvarta or Madhyadeśa excludes a portion of Haryana lying beyond Vinaśana, which according to Manu seems to have been included in Brahmarṣideśa,[16] comprising Kurukṣetra, Matsya, Pañcala and Śūrasena. Brahmarṣideśa was superior to Āryāvarta and the Brāhmaṇas, living in this region, are extolled as worthy of being emulated by the people of the world[17] (*etaddeśa-prasūtasya sakāśād-agrajanmanaḥ/ svaṁ svaṁ caritraṁ śikṣeran pṛthivyāṁ sarva-mānavāḥ//*).

Haryana was the meeting ground of the two important cultural divisions of India. Manu[18] pays eloquent tribute to the people of Kurukṣetra for their martial prowess as he recommends them to be placed in the vanguard of an army

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(*Kurukṣetrāṁś-ca Matsyāṁś-ca Pañcālān Śūrasenajān/ dīrghān laghūṁś-aiva narān-agrānīkeṣu yodhayet//*).

The biography of Harṣa,[19] *Harṣacaritam*,[20] composed by the 7th Century Sanskrit author Bāṇabhaṭṭa, is a mine of information for the history of the Puṣyabhūtis, under whose stewardship the kingdom of Sthāṇvīśvara[21] rose into eminence. It should however be borne in mind that biographical works like the one Bāṇa composed seldom merit the title history. Even their importance as documents of history is considerably diminished by such non-historical traits as the sacrifice of factual accuracy at the altar of ornate language, frequent occurrences of words and phrases of dubious import, hyperbolic statements about the achievements of patron-kings and an all-pervasive partisan spirit in the judgement of men and events.

Bāṇa credits Puṣyabhūti with the foundation of the kingdom although this king is otherwise unknown.[22] Bāṇa is conspicuously silent about the immediate successors of Puṣyabhūti, but begins his narrative with Prabhākaravardhana, born in his family.[23] From *Harṣacaritam* we learn that Prabhākara, also named Pratāpaśīla, was endowed with three sons, called Rājyavardhana, Harṣavardhana and Kṛṣṇa, and a daughter Rājyaśrī.

Although Bāṇa describes the reign of Prabhākara at great length, what is historically significant is limited to six attributes applied to the king, "a lion to the Hūṇa deer, a burning fever to the king of Sindhu, a troubler of the sleep of the Gurjara king, a bilious fever to that scent elephant, the lord of Gandhāra, destroyer of the skill of the Lāṭas, an axe to the creeper, which is the goddess of fortune (or sovereignty) of Mālava."[24]

As RC Majumdar[25] rightly observes: "This poetical description leaves us in doubt whether he actually defeated these powers or was a mere threat to them." *Harṣacaritam* says that sometime before his death Prabhākara sent the crown prince Rājya to Uttarāpatha to lead a military expedition against the Hūṇas, but on being informed of his father's illness he promptly returned to the capital. His father was however already dead while his mother Yaśomatī ended her life by burning herself on the bank of the Sarasvatī.

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Overwhelmed with grief, Rājya was determined to renounce the throne in favour of his younger brother Harṣa and become an ascetic. But the news of the assassination of his brother-in-law Grahavarman, king of Kanauj, and imprisonment of Rājyaśrī by the king of Mālava induced him to march against the adversary with an army of 10,000 cavalry, leaving his younger brother in charge of the kingdom.

Rājya inflicted a crushing defeat on the Mālava army, but being "allured to confidence by false civilities on the part of the king of Gauḍa" was slain by the latter.[26] When the news of this calamity reached Harṣa, he took a vow of vengeance against the king of Gauḍa and began marching "for the subjugation of all the four quarters."[27] After traversing some distance he met Haṁsavega, a messenger from Bhāskaravarman, with whom he concluded a perpetual alliance.[28]

Harṣa continued his advance for some days more, till he came across Bhaṇḍi, who told him about the escape of Rājyaśrī with her train to the Vindhya forest. Harṣa entrusted Bhaṇḍi with charge of the army to be directed against Gauḍa and set out in search of his sister. He reached the forest when Rājyaśrī was about to mount the funeral pyre. Then he and his sister returned to his camp on the bank of the Ganges. Bāṇa's narrative abruptly ends here, and the story of the subsequent career of Harṣa is writ large in the pages of *Si-yu-ki* and the *Mañjuśrī Mūlakalpa*.

The *Kumārikākhaṇḍam*[29] section of the Skanda Purāṇa mentions the Tomara country, which included a large tract of Haryana, and the Kuru realm as comprising 125,000 and 64,000 villages respectively (*Tomaraś-cāpi Karṇāṭo yugalaś-ca trayas-tvime| sapāda-lakṣa-grāmāṇāṁ pratyekaṁ parikīrttitaḥ||*). If the authenticity of the Skanda Purāṇa[30] is unquestionable, Kurukṣetra would compare well in sanctity with such sacred places as Prabhāsa, Puṣkara, Vārāṇasī, Prayāga and Naimiṣāraṇya (*Kurukṣetreṣu yat puṇyaṁ Prabhāse Puṣkareṣu ca| Vārāṇasyāṁ ca yat puṇyaṁ Prayāge Naimiṣ-epi vā|tat puṇyaṁ labhate marttyo Jayāditya-prasādataḥ||*).

Kāvyamīmāṁsā, a well-known work on Sanskrit poetics, states that *Apabhraṁśa* was spoken by the Ṭakkas, the people of Maru and the Bhādanakas. Although the location of the last-named territory is somewhat doubtful, there are reasons

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for believing that it comprised Gurgaon district, Bhiwani tehsil of Hissar district and a part of the erstwhile Alwar state.[31] Rājaśekhara then bears witness to the prevalence of *Apabhraṁśa* in some parts of Haryana.

An old *Bahī*[32] in the private collection of D Sharma speaks of a battle between the Cāhamānas and the Taṁvaras in the Vikrama year 1209 in the reign of Vīsaladeva or Vigraharāja IV. The Taṁvaras, who have been identified with the Tomaras, were defeated and lost Delhi. As will be shown subsequently, the textual evidence about the defeat of the Tomara kings agrees with the inscriptional evidence. As regards the date of the battle, as indicated in the *Bahī*, Sharma[33] points out that the "date does not seem unreasonable, though it is not possible to vouch for its absolute accuracy."

Pṛthvīrāja-vijaya[34] of the Kashmiri poet Jayānaka, *Pṛthvīrāja Rāso* written by Cand Bardāi[35] in the old Rājasthānī dialect, *Kharataragaccha-paṭṭāvalī* of Jinapāla, *Hammīra Mahākāvya* of the Jaina Sūri Nayacandra, *Viruddhavidhi-viddhavaṁśa* of Lakṣmīdhara and *Prabandha-cintāmaṇi* of Merutuṅga likewise rank as source books of history of Punjab-Haryana in particular and North India in general. They afford interesting glimpses into the struggle for supremacy between the great Cāhamāna king Pṛthvīrāja III and the Turkish conqueror Mu'izz-ud-dīn Muhammad.

Buddhist texts, like the Brahmanical works, may be profitably used to throw light on the history of Haryana. The *Aṅguttara Nikāya*[36] mentions Kuru as one of 16 *mahājanapadas*, possessing abundant food and wealth as well as seven kinds of precious gems. Texts like the *Dhūmakāri Jātaka* and *Daśa Brāhmaṇa Jātaka* describe the royal family of the country as belonging to the *Yuddhiṭṭhila-gotta* and having its headquarters at Indapatta or Indapattana, located at Indraprastha or Indrapat near Delhi.

The Kuru realm was 300 leagues in extent while its capital extended over seven leagues. We are told in the *Papañcasūdānī*[37] that in the course of his sojourn in the Kuru land the Buddha used to reside in a forest outside the town of Kammāsadhamma of unknown identity. Buddhist literature mentions such kings as Dhanañjaya Koravya, Koravya and

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Sutasoma, but their historical existence remains an open question until further evidence is forthcoming.

A survey of literary evidence as a source of history of Haryana cannot but remain incomplete without a brief reference to the accounts of some foreign writers, prominent of them being the classical writer Q Curtius Rufus, Diodorus Siculus, the celebrated Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang and the reputed Muslim historian Muhammad Kasim Hindu Shah, surnamed Ferishta.

Describing the region beyond the river Hyphasis Q Curtius Rufus[38] says: "Beyond the river lay extensive deserts which it would take 11 days to traverse. Next came the Ganges, the largest river in all India, the farther bank of which was inhabited by two nations, the Gangaridae and the Prasii, whose King Agrammes kept in the field for guarding the approaches to his country 20,000 cavalry and 200,000 infantry, besides 2,000 four-horsed chariots, and what was the most formidable force of all a troop of elephants which he said ran up to the number of 3000."

With this may be compared the following account of Diodorus Siculus.[39] "First came a desert which it would take 12 days to traverse; beyond this was the river called the Ganges which had a width of 32 stadia and a greater depth than any other Indian river; beyond this again was situated the dominions of the nation of the Praisioi and the Gandaridai, whose King Xandrames had an army of 20,000 horse, 200,000 infantry, 2,000 chariots and 4,000 elephants trained and equipped for war."

Since no king is mentioned in these accounts as occupying the land between the river Hyphasis and the dominions of Agrammes, it may be safely concluded that Haryana formed an integral part of the kingdom of the Imperial Nanda rulers of Pāṭaliputra.

The account of Ptolemy is not of any mean value for the reconstruction of the history of this area in the period of Kuṣāṇa hegemony. In Fg 47 the geographer states that the regions extending from the country of the Pandoouoi around the Bidaspes, identified with the Jhelum, "towards the east are possessed by the Kaspeiraioi as far as Modoura, the city of the gods."[40] Levi[41] has shown that the kingdom of the

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Kaspeiraioi undoubtedly refers to the empire of the Kuṣāṇas, which, as defined above, stretched from eastern Punjab to Mathura in the east.

The Chinese pilgrim Fa-hien must have passed through Haryana on his way to Mathura from the kingdom of Poh-na. The pilgrim's description of a country named Pe-t'oo seems to be applicable to both Punjab and Haryana. To quote the Chinese traveller:[42] "After they had crossed the river, there was a country named Pe-t'oo, where Buddhism was very flourishing, and (the monks) studied both the *Mahāyāna* and *Hīnayāna*. When they saw their fellow-disciples from Ts'in passing along, they were moved with great pity and sympathy and expressed themselves thus: 'How is it that these men from a borderland should have learned to become monks, and come for the sake of our doctrines from such a distance in search of the Law of Buddha?' They supplied them with what they needed, and treated them in accordance with the rules of the Law."

In the first half of the 7th Century AD Hiuen Tsang visited the kingdom of Thanesar, which he calls Sa-t'a-nishi-fa-lo. In this period the kingdom was under the occupation of the Puṣyabhūti King Harṣa, but, strangely enough, the pilgrim describes him as the king of Kanauj and "does not refer to him in any way in his account of the kingdom of Thanesar."[43]

This may lead to the conclusion that with his possession of the Maukhari kingdom Kanauj became the capital of the Vardhana Empire, and by the time of Hiuen Tsang's visit to Thanesar, Harṣa's association with the original seat of government "had become merely a memory of a distant past."

Regarding the kingdom of Thanesar and its people Hiuen Tsang says: "This kingdom is about 7000 *li* in circuit, the capital 20 *li* or so. The soil is rich and productive and abounds with grain (cereals). The climate is genial, though hot. The manners of the people are cold and insincere. The families are rich and given to excessive luxury. They are much addicted to the use of magical arts, and greatly honour those of distinguished ability in other ways. Most of the people follow after worldly gain; a few give themselves to agricultural pursuits. There is a large accumulation here of rare and valuable

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merchandise from every quarter. There are three *saṅghārāmas* in this country, with about 700 priests. They all study (practise or use) the Little Vehicle. There are some hundred Deva temples, and sectaries of various kinds in great number."[44]

Going back to the days of Aśoka, the Chinese pilgrim[45] says: "To the northwest of the city four or five *li* is a stūpa about 300 feet high built by Aśoka-rāja. The bricks are of a yellowish red colour, very bright and shining; within is a peck measure of the relics of Buddha. From the *stūpa* is frequently emitted a brilliant light, and many spiritual prodigies exhibit themselves."

The account of the embassy of Wang-hiuen-tse,[46] as furnished by the Chinese writer Ma-twan-lin (13th Century AD) is sometimes utilised as affording light on the obscure history of the kingdom of Thanesar-Kanauj in the period after the death of Harṣa.

The minister A-la-na-shuen (Arjuna or Aruṇāśva) usurped the throne immediately after Harṣa's death in AD 647 or 648 and dishonoured the Chinese envoy Wang-hiuen-tse, who afterwards with the aid of the Tibetan King Srong-btsan-Gampo and the Napalese King Aṁśumān inflicted a disastrous defeat upon him.

After leading similar successful campaigns throughout India, Wang-hiuen-tse returned to China in AD 648, taking with him Arjuna as a prisoner of war. Arjuna remained in China till his death and was awarded posthumous honours. It is difficult to judge in the absence of any corroborative evidence how far this account is authentic, and if the view of RC Majumdar[47] is correct "this account beats all records and reads more like a romance or a string of fables than sober history."

If on the other hand the account is accepted as trustworthy, Arjuna may be in no way associated with the region of Thanesar-Kanauj, for though regarded as the successor of Harṣa he is called the ruler of Ti-na-fu-ti which has been identified with Tīrabhukti in North Bihar.

Mention may be made of *Gulshan-i-Ibrāhīmī* of Muhammad Kasim Hindu Shah. This work has come to be reckoned a classic for completeness of details, impartial treatment of themes and general accuracy in regard to the history of the

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rise of the Mahommedan power in India up to AD 1612.

Ferishta gives us a graphic account of the capture of the sacred site of Thanesar by Sultan Mahmūd in AH 402. On being allured by the wealth of this city Mahmūd marched from Ghazni with a vast army at his command in AD 1011. The king of Delhi, resolving to oppose the invader, sent messengers to the courts of other Indian rulers to come forward and join hands with him at Thanesar "to avert the impending calamity."

But Mahmūd reached Thanesar with such rapidity that he found the city unguarded. He plundered it and destroyed all the idols except the principal one which was dispatched to Ghazni to be trodden underfoot. After the capture of Thanesar Mahmūd wished to proceed to Delhi but his nobles advised him that "it would be impossible to keep possession of it till he had rendered Mooltan a province of his own government and secured himself from all apprehensions of Anundpal, Rājā of Lahore."[48]

Mahmūd accordingly returned to Ghazni. "On this occasion", as Ferishta[49] tells us, "the Mahommedan army brought to Ghizny 200,000 captives and much wealth, so that the capital appeared like an Indian city, no soldier of the camp being without wealth, or without many slaves."

Numismatics

Numismatics, like literary evidence, is of immense value for the reconstruction of the early history of Haryana, where a large number of so-called punch-marked and cast coins[50] have been discovered from places like Khokrakot, Agroha, Sugh, Chaneti, Naurangabad, Hansi and Hissar. From Agroha and its neighbourhood in Hissar district have been unearthed some copper coins[51] which may be grouped into two distinct varieties on the basis of their legends.

The legend of the first variety of coins reads *Agodaka Agāca-janapadasa*, "[This is the coin] of the *janapada* or corporation of the Agācas [struck at] Agrodaka." The legend on the other group has been read as *Agāca-mitrapad-ābhiṣṭhāyinām*, which Sircar[52] translates as "[This is the coin] of those who dwell at the feet of [the god] Agratyamitra."

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There is no consensus among numismatists in regard to the interpretation of the legend appearing on the second group of coins.

Barnett traces in it a reference to *mitrapada* which he further interprets as meaning "an allied state", a state allied to the Agāca tribe. Sircar[53] explains the legend as meaning that the Agratyas were specially devoted to the god Agratya-mitra, "the friend of the Agratyas."

Sircar[54] points out: "In this case, therefore, the coins are not represented as the issues of the deity to whom a people was particularly devoted. On the other hand, a people (Agratyas of Agrodaka, the same as the Agravālas of today) that issued the coins, is represented as devoted to the god enjoying their special devotion."

These coins then disclose the existence of a ruling tribe named Agāca who had their headquarters presumably at a place called Agrodaka,[55] identified with modern Agroha.[56] The term *Agāca*, as Jagannath[57] points out, may be equated with the Sanskrit *Agatya* or *Agastya*, for "Sanskrit *tya* becomes *cha* in Prākṛt, and the preceding vowel is lengthened."

The term has however been taken by some[58] as representing the Sanskrit Āgreya and by others[59] as Agratya, meaning the people of Agra. PL Gupta believes that this and similar other kingdoms came to power with the decline of the Maurya Empire. It is difficult to subscribe to the view held by Allan that Agrodaka or Angodraka may be identified with the Oxydrakai mentioned by the classical writers.

A large number of coins bearing the names of nearly half the Indo-Greek rulers have been discovered at Khokrakot. Discovery of coins at this site and of coin moulds of some Indo-Greek rulers at Naurangabad would tend to prove the Indo-Greek occupation of parts of Haryana in the 2nd and 1st Centuries BC.

This was also the period which witnessed the growth of the Yaudheyas as a political community. A large number of Yaudheya coins which have been unearthed in the districts of Ambala, Karnal, Rohtak and Hissar of Haryana as well as in Ludhiana district of Punjab besides some other places in Pakistan, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.

Typologically, the Yaudheya coins belong to eight types,

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although chronologically they are assignable to three distinct periods. The earliest known specimens belong to the late 2nd and 1st Centuries BC, indicating a period of independence of the tribe from the downfall of the Mauryas to the advent of the Kuṣāṇas.

A second class of Yaudheya coins, revealing the poor state of currency, has been assigned to the 2nd Century AD, and if Allan is to be relied upon, "it reflects the disastrous effects of Rudradāman's victory and the war with the Śakas." A third class of Yaudheya coins, showing Kuṣāṇa influence both in style and types, is ascribed to the 3rd and 4th Centuries AD. Some of the earliest Yaudheya coins bear the legend *Bahudhāñake Yodheyānāṁ*, which has been interpreted by Jagannath[60] to imply that the Yaudheyas were in possession of the territory, which was exceptionally rich and prosperous.

Sircar[61] takes this inscription to mean that these coins were struck in the city of Bahudhānyaka, which he locates in the Rohtak region where the moulds of these coins have been discovered. The reading of *bahudhāñake* has been opposed by Cunningham and Smith, who prefer *bhūmidhanuṣa* and *bhūpadhanuṣa* respectively.

While commenting on the reading of Smith, Chakraborty[62] observes: "Smith is almost positive about the reading *bhūpadhanuṣa*, and as this word means 'of the Lord of the Desert' and seems to fit in with the locality of the Yaudheyas, its correctness is beyond doubt."

But the reading of the legend as *bahudhāñake* in the sense of richness and prosperity of the area under the Yaudheyas receives confirmation from the testimony of the Mahābhārata which speaks of the region as abounding in grains (*bahu-dhānyaka*) and riches (*bahu-dhana*).

On a group of the Yaudheya coins we have a legend that has usually been read and interpreted as *Bhagavata-svāmino Brahmaṇya(sya) Yaudheya* or *Yaudheya-bhāgavata-svāmino Brahmaṇyasya*, "of Brahmaṇya (a name of Kārttikeya), the divine lord of the Yaudheyas." DC Sircar[63] has amended the reading to *Bhagavataḥ Svāmino Brahmaṇyasya Yaudheyānāṁ*, "[This is the coin] of the Divine Lord Brahmaṇya (and) the Yaudheyas."

If Sircar's reading is accepted, it follows that this series of

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coins was issued not in the name of the god Brahmaṇyadeva alone but in that of both the Yaudheya tribe and the god of whom they were avowed devotees. A class of the Yaudheya coins contains the legend *Yaudheyagaṇasya jayaḥ* (Victory be to the Republic of the Yaudheyas) and in some instances we have *dvi* and *tri* in addition. These words may be contractions respectively of the words *dvitīya* and *tritīya*, indicating the second and third sections of the Yaudheya tribe. AS Altekar believes that these coins were struck as commemorative medallions to signify the great victory of the Yaudheyas over the Kuṣāṇas.

Notwithstanding the discovery of a large number of coins and a few inscriptions doubts still persist over many points relating to the history of the Yaudheyas:

1. The provenances of coins and seals, coupled with the testimony of literary and epigraphic documents would imply that extensive territory was under the Yaudheyas, extending "from Ludhiyana to Shaharanpur in one direction and from Shaharanpur to Bahawalpur in another", but there is as yet no definite proof to show that they occupied this vast territory at any given period of time. The possibility that "they held different parts of the aforesaid area in the course of their diffusion at different times" cannot be ruled out.

2. Although the existence of the Yaudheyas as a distinct community is traceable from the days of Pāṇini down to the latter half of the 4th Century AD, we are still in the dark about the nature of their relations with the Maurya, Indo-Greek and Kuṣāṇa kings.

3. How far the Yaudheyas were instrumental in bringing about the downfall of the Kuṣāṇa empire has yet to be decided beyond dispute for the deathblow to the Kuṣāṇa power might have been delivered by the Sassanid emperors of Iran, providing the Yaudheyas with the opportunity to dance on the corpse of the Kuṣāṇa kingdom.

4. The exact significance of the words *dvi* and *tri*, occurring on the Yaudheya coins is still defying a solution.

From several places in Haryana like Karnal, Buria, Sugh, Jagadhari and Naraingarh have been unearthed a large number of Kuṇinda coins struck in the name of Mahārāja Amoghabhūti. Opinions differ on the identification of

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Amoghabhūti. VA Smith takes the word to be the name of a king while others have interpreted the term in the sense of an official title (literally meaning "unfailing prosperity) adopted by the Kuṇinda chiefs from c 150 BC to c AD 200.[64]

US Rao[65] has reported the discovery of coins of the Śaka and Kuṣāṇa kings from Khokrakot. From Kalka-Kasauli Road have been discovered 382 copper coins of Wema Kadphises as well as 40 copper issues of Kaṇiṣka I.[66] At Naurangabad[67] a large size elephant-rider type copper coin of Huviṣka has been found.

From Khokrakot[68] have been discovered some copper coins of Kaṇiṣka I and Huviṣka. The same place has also yielded a Kuṣāṇa coin mould showing on the reverse Ardoksho standing and holding a cornucopia.

But as VS Agrawala[69] rightly observes, "whether this mould was official or for forgery cannot be determined with certainty." But that its purpose seems to have been to cast a gold coin of Huviṣka admits of no doubt. From Mithathal[70] in Hissar district was found in 1950 a hoard of coins which originally contained 86 pieces, of which 26 were melted down. Of the rest, 33 belong to Samudragupta and 27 to the later Kuṣāṇas.

But our knowledge of the history of Haryana in the period of Yaudheya-Kuṣāṇa rule is considerably supplemented by the excavated material at Sugh II, Daulatpur IV, Karna Ka Qila II and Naurangabad. This period is characterised by the use of red polished ware and the early historic red ware, construction of planned houses with sun-dried or baked bricks, introduction of the rotary quern, existence of industry in copper and iron, exuberance of terracotta art, "marked by an exquisite modelling, rationalisation in ornamentation and drapery and beautiful hairdo approaching the classical idiom", and the use of clay ramparts for the protection of towns.

From the village of Bhitaura[71] in Fyzabad district of Uttar Pradesh has been discovered an earthen pot containing 522 silver and eight copper coins, of which 284 silver coins bear the name Śrī Śīlāditya, nine belong to Pratāpaśīla and one is of a king named Harṣa.

Richard Burn[72] long ago identified Pratāpaśīla of the coins with Prabhākaravardhana and Śīlāditya with Harṣa, although

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Hoernle[73] would prefer their identification to a king named Pratāpaśīla-Śīlāditya, described in *Rājatarańgiṇī* as the son and successor of Vikramāditya, regarded as the same as Yaśodharman of Malwa.

Hoernle has opposed the attribution of the coins bearing the name Śīlāditya to King Harṣa on the basis of the following arguments:

First, Śīlāditya was not the official title of Harṣa. Only Buddhists knew the Puṣyabhūti king by this title.

Secondly, *Rājatarańgiṇī* discloses the existence of a king called Śīlāditya-Pratāpaśīla who ruled in Malwa as the son and successor of King Vikramāditya, identified with Yaśodharman.

Neither of these arguments appears to be convincing. It is difficult to say with certainty whether Śīlāditya was a title or an alternative name of Harṣa. It is likewise hard to believe that the name or title, which became so well-known to Buddhists, was unknown to the mint masters working in the royal mints. Secondly, the existence of a king called Śīlāditya-Pratāpaśīla who inherited the throne of Yaśodharman has yet to be proved, and even if credence is assigned to the testimony of Kalhaṇa it remains to be explained why a feat, left unattempted by his more illustrious predecessor, could have been ventured upon by a *roi faineant* in the days of great turmoil. The coins bearing the name or title of Śīlāditya have been found in Fyzabad district which formed a part of Harṣa's dominions, and the attribution of these coins to him is fairly sound when it is remembered that no other king of the same name or title is known to have ruled over this region before Harṣavardhana.

HA Phadke[74] has suggested on the basis of the arguments enumerated below that the so-called Pratāpaśīla coins were issued by King Harṣa in the memory of his father consequent upon the transfer of his capital to Kanauj:

1. The coins of Pratāpaśīla have been discovered in Fyzabad district and not in the kingdom of Prabhākaravardhana.

2. Pratāpaśīla was a *biruda* and not the proper name of Prabhākaravardhana. If Prabhākaravardhana had issued these coins, how is it that no coins in the name of Prabhākaravardhana have yet come to light?

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3. "The Pratāpaśīla coins were issued actually by Harṣa in the memory of his father after the transfer of his capital to Kanauj."

These arguments hardly bear the test of scrutiny. It is true that the coins of Pratāpaśīla have not been found from Thanesar and its neighbourhood, but the discovery of his coins from Fyzabad district does not militate against his identity with Prabhākaravardhana. The migratory character of coins is well known. Whereas North Africa and Southeast Asia have yielded a few Kuṣāṇa coins, some Chinese coins have been reported from South India.

Secondly, Pratāpaśīla was not a *biruda* but an alternative name of Prabhākaravardhana. Instances of coins being struck with the *biruda* in ancient India are rare but not altogether unknown. The assumption that the Pratāpaśīla coins were issued by Harṣa as commemorative medallions in the memory of his father is not supported by any positive evidence. No indigenous king in ancient India is definitely known to have struck such coins.

KD Bajpai[75] refers to a unique gold coin of Harṣa which shows on its reverse the figures of Śiva and Pārvatī seated on Nandi. Harṣa's reverence for such Brahmanical deities as Śiva and Sūrya is also borne out by the testimony of Hiuen Tsang.

Reference may be made to those coins bearing the names of Sallakṣaṇapāladeva, Ajayapāladeva, Kumārapāladeva, Anaṅgapāladeva and Mahīpāla which have been assigned by Cunningham to the Tomaras. Lallanji Gopal[76] describes these coins as follows: "The coins of Sallakṣaṇapāladeva have on the obverse a rude figure of a horseman carrying a lance to right with the marginal legend *Śrī Sallakṣaṇapāladeva*, whereas the reverse has the figure of a recumbent humped bull to left in outline with the legend *Śrī Sāmantadeva*. On the coins of Ajayapāladeva the obverse has in large characters the legend *Śrī Ajayapāladeva* in three lines, whereas the reverse has the four-armed figure of Lakṣmī seated. The coins of Kumārapāladeva are of the seated goddess type, but Anaṅgapāladeva reverts to the horseman and bull type and discontinues the seated goddess type. Mahīpāla adopts both the types. It was in imitation of his example that Muhammad bin Sām or Shihab-ud-dīn struck coins of these two types."

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Attribution of these coins to the Tomaras of Delhi, as suggested by Cunningham, has not been proved beyond dispute, and Lallanji Gopal[77] has advanced arguments in favour of his supposition that it was not the Tomaras but the Yadus of Bayana, of the erstwhile Bharatpur state of Rajasthan, who struck the coinage under discussion.

MC Joshi[78] upholds the view that the horseman and bull type of coins struck in the names of Sallakṣaṇapāla, Anaṅgapāla and Mahīpāla were Tomara issues, and that those belonging to the seated goddess type bearing the names of Ajayapāladeva, Kumārapāladeva and Mahīpāladeva may be ascribed to a different dynasty. Ajayapāla and Kumārapāla of the so-called Tomara coinage are sometimes described as belonging to the Caulukya dynasty,[79] but these views are open to serious objections.

The coins of the Cāhamāna Kings Someśvaradeva and Pṛthvīrāja III deserve mention. The obverse of the coins of Someśvara has generally the figure of a horseman with a lance to right as well as the legend *Śrī-Someśvaradeva* or *Soma* or *Śrī-Soma* in Nāgarī characters. The reverse shows the figure of a recumbent humped bull and the legend which is generally read as *Asāvarī Śrī-Sāmantadeva.*

Thomas,[80] followed by Smith,[81] explains Asāvarī as a title of the goddess Durgā. Lallanji Gopal[82] maintains that what is read as *va* should really be taken to be *pu* and Āśāpurī was the tutelary deity of the Cāhamānas, as testified by *Pṛthvīrāja-vijaya.*

The coins of Pṛthvīrāja III follow the type adopted by his father Someśvara, including the legend on the reverse. The obverse gives the name of the king as *Śrī-Pṛthvīrājadeva.* On a unique coin the reverse legend *Asāvarī Śrī-Sāmantadeva* is replaced by *Śrī-Mahimada Sāma.*

HN Wright, who has discribed this type in his *Coinage and Metrology of the Sultans of Delhi*, p 12, No 36-A, believes that this coin was issued by the Ghaznavide Sultan "as a suzerain of Pṛthvīrāja of Ajmer." KD Singh[83] asserts that this coin was actually issued by Mu'izz-ud-dīn Muhammad bin Sām, who, guided as he was by political considerations, retained on it, at least for some time, the name of the Cāhamāna King Pṛthvīrāja, overthrown by him.

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PL Gupta[84] suggests that the name of the Cāhamāna king occurs on the coin of Muhammad bin Sām owing to a mistake of his mint officers. Altekar[85] supports the view of Gupta as he says: "The mistake must have been seen before half a dozen coins were issued and corrected immediately by putting the proper obverse die of the new reign. Hence the extreme rarity of this coin type . . ."

D Sharma[86] suggests that the coin might have been minted by Pṛthvīrāja in his period of short rule as a vassal of Muhammad consequent on his defeat at the hands of the Turkish conqueror.

Dealing with the problem of the authorship of this coin Sircar[87] observes: "It is however difficult to believe that the mint masters of Muhammad bin Sām could have committed such a strange mistake and taken considerable time in detecting it. But if it is suggested that the type represented by the coin in question was issued by a private agency, its characteristics can possibly be explained even if the Cāhamāna king was dead at the time of its issue. It is well known that in India sometimes the adherents of a king, either dead or overthrown by enemies, dated their records in the years of his *atīta*, *gata* or *vinaṣṭarājya*."

The paucity of evidence hardly allows us to ascertain the real significance of this coin, and for the solution of the problem the historian will have to look forward eagerly to the discovery of fresh evidence.

Inscriptions (3)

Last but not least in point of importance are the epigraphic records discovered from within or without Haryana. The inscriptions engraved on rocks, boulders, pillars, walls, copper plates, images, seals and sealings were issued by kings, state officials or private individuals, including traders and pilgrims. The Topra pillar in Ambala district contains all the seven pillar edicts of the Maurya Emperor Aśoka and provides us with positive proof of the spread of Maurya territorial jurisdiction to the area, a conclusion which is further strengthened by the discovery of a Maurya *stūpa* at Chaneti and two Aśokan pillars in Hissar and Fatehabad.

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The valour of the Yaudheya people is eulogised in the Junagadh inscription of the Western Kṣatrapa ruler Rudradāman. It was by the beginning of the sixth century AD that the Puṣyabhūtis founded a principality around Thanesar. The royal seals and inscriptions preserve the names of these kings, which may be represented in the following genealogical table:

Mahārāja Naravardhana = Vajriṇīdevī
|
Mahārāja Rājyavardhana = Apsarodevī
|
Mahārāja Ādityavardhana | = Mahāsenaguptādevī
Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja
Prabhākaravardhana = Yaśomatīdevī
|
| |
Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja Rājyavardhana | *Paramabhaṭṭāraka Mahārājādhirāja* Harṣavardhana

The Khalimpur copper plate inscription of Dharmapāla refers to the Kurus as uttering acclamations of approval, bowing respectfully with their diadems trembling, along with other kings, of the installations of the king of Kānyakubja by the Pāla suzerain.[88]

It has been inferred from this that the region around Thanesar, as well as Punjab, eastern Rajasthan, Malwa and Berar were vassal states under Dharmapāla at least for some time, and their rulers "were left undisturbed so long as they acknowledged the supremacy of the emperor and rendered such homage and military assistance as might have been fixed by usage and treaties."[89]

An inscription of the year AD 882[90] discovered at Pehoa records the transaction of business at a local horse fair by a band of horse dealers "in the auspicious and victorious reign of Bhojadeva."[91] This proves beyond doubt that the Pratīhāra monarch Bhoja I annexed a part of Haryana. It may be mentioned in this connection that the date of the Pehoa inscription is the last known date of the reign of Bhoja I.

The undated Pehoa inscription[92] of the time of Mahendra-

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pāla I gives us an interesting account of a local Tomara dynasty in the Karnal area. It states that there was the Rājā Jāula of the exalted Tomara-vaṁśa who obtained prosperity by looking after the affairs of "a king". He was evidently a petty feudatory chief or a high official in the service of an unknown powerful king.

In the lineage of Jāula was born Vajraṭa whose son and successor was Jajjuka, who was again succeeded by his son Gogga. Gogga, who appears to have been a feudatory under the Pratīhāra Mahendrapāla, is described as a *bhūnātha* (lord of the earth). The inscription next mentions that Gogga and his two step-brothers, Pūrṇarāja and Devarāja, founded at Pṛthūdaka, on the bank of the river Sarasvatī, three temples of Viṣṇu in the reign of Mahendrapāla I.

Kielhorn[93] says these Tomaras were probably connected with Delhi and might not have had any political relations with Pehoa "for Pṛthūdaka was a place of so great sanctity that even pious men from distant countries may have built temples there; and if strangers did so, their inscriptions as a matter of course would mention the ruling king of the country."

The Tomaras of Delhi ruled over Haryana with their headquarters in Delhi, and the memory of their struggle for survival with the Cāhamāna kings and their ultimate disappearance from the political scene is preserved in a few inscriptions of the latter group of rulers. The fragmentary Chauhan *praśasti*, which is now preserved in the Ajmer Museum, testifies to the presence of the victorious army of the Cāhamāna King Arṇorāja on the banks of the rivers Sarasvatī and Kālindī and the resultant grief of the women of the Haritānaka country.[94]

The Bijholi inscription[95] of the reign of the Cāhamāna monarch Someśvara speaks of Vigraharāja IV's capture of Ḍhillikā and Āśikā, identified with Delhi and Hansi respectively, probably from the Tomara king Anaṅgapāla III.

A Delhi Museum inscription[96] dated AD 1328 in the reign of Muhammad Tughlug says: "There is a country called Hariyāna, a very heaven on earth. There lies the city called Ḍhillikā built by the Tomaras. Wherein subsequent to the Tomaras, the Cāhamāna kings intent on protecting their subjects established a kingdom in which all enemies of public

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order were struck down. Thereupon the *mleccha* Sāhavadīna, having burnt down the forest of hostile tribes by the fire of his valour, seized the city by force."

This is in agreement with the evidence of the Palam Baoli inscription[97] of the reign of Balban: "The land of Hariyānaka was first enjoyed by the Tomaras and then by the Chauhānas. It is now ruled by the Śaka kings. First came Sāhavadīna,[98] then came Khuduvadīna,[99] then Asamasadīna,[100] then Pherija-Sāhi[101] became king."

On the basis of these and the Delhi Siwalik pillar inscription we may conclude with considerable justification that the region around Delhi was known as Hariyāna in the reign of the Tomaras, who relinquished control over their territory as a consequence of their reverses at the hands of the Cāhamāna King Vigraharāja III Vīsaladeva by the middle of the 12th Century AD. The region subsequently passed into the hands of the Ghurids.

Evaluation of the Hypothesis of Decline in Trade

It may be interesting to evaluate the hypothesis of declining trade and commerce in North India from AD 600 to AD 1000 in the light of our knowledge of the history of Haryana as gleaned from the sources enumerated above.

Contemporary sources bear witness to the fertility of the soil and richness of the region in agricultural produce. A detailed description of such produce of the Śrīkaṇṭha *janapada* of which Thanesar was the capital is found in Bāṇa's *Harṣacarita*. We are told that crops like paddy, wheat and sugarcane were cultivated in abundance whereas bananas and pomegranates were extensively planted.

The region abounded in cows, buffaloes and sheep.[102] The fertility of the soil is confirmed by the testimony of Hiuen Tsang, who however points out that the majority of people pursued trade while a few were engaged in agriculture. Thanesar maintained trade relations with other parts of India and, as the Chinese pilgrim would make us believe, possessed a large accumulation of rare and valuable merchandise imported from "every quarter".[103]

Welcome light on trade in horses at places like Pehoa in

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Haryana by the last quarter of the 9th Century AD is afforded by the Pehoa inscription of the time of the Gurjara-Pratīhāra King Bhoja I. The inscription records that a band of horse dealers belonging to nine different localities met at a horse fair (*ghoṭaka-yātrāyaṁ sam-āyāta*) at Pehoa under a foreman and agreed to impose upon themselves and their customers certain taxes or tithes, the proceeds of which were to be distributed among some temples, priests and sanctuaries at Pehoa, Kānyakubja, Gotīrtha and Bhojapura.[104] The levies were two *drammas* to be deducted from the sum a dealer received for each animal sold and one *dramma* to be paid by the buyer of each animal in addition to the price stipulated.[105] Members of a committee called *goṣṭhikas* were entrusted with the collection and distribution of the charity.

The following facts emerge from a study of the inscription:

1. Pṛthūdaka occupied a focal point in the horse trade, being the scene of frequent visits by dealers and customers from different localities.

2. The people of different castes, including Brahmins, evinced interest in the horse trade, although it is far from being clear whether they traded directly with foreign countries or were intermediaries.

3. Although the inscription does not specifically mention the fact that the dealers met at Pehoa under a foreman is possibly an indication that they were organised in a guild.

4. Insistence of the dealers on a uniform application of their resolution to the nobility and ordinary men alike is a pointer to the importance that trading organisations exerted on society at large.

The fairly flourishing state of trade and commerce led to the growth and development of several urban centres in Haryana. Thanesar, whose existence as a centre of pilgrimage is traceable to the early Gupta period,[106] had developed into a political centre by the last quarter of the 6th Century AD and the place with its markets, emporiums, palaces and the communities of businessmen, artists, scientists and philosophers became a centre of brisk activity in the first half of the 7th Century AD.

As late as AD 1011-12 the prosperity of Thanesar was sufficiently striking to invite the attention of Sultan Mahmūd,

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who plundered the city and returned with rich booty which was, as Utbi points out, impossible to recount.[107] Kurukshetra, Panipat and Kaithal were some important townships of the region, as is borne out by the testimony of Al Biruni.[108]

The number of urban centres in Haryana was quite imposing at the time of the invasion of Sultan Muizz-ud-dīn Muhammad bin Sām and the list includes Taraori, Thanesar, Hansi, Jhajjar, Jind, Kaithal, Rohtak, Karnal, Palwal, Panipat, Rewari and Barwala.[109]

Communication between different parts of Haryana was rendered easier by the existence of a network of routes referred to in contemporary sources. The account of the Muslim traveller Al Biruni speaks of at least three land routes,[110] the Thanesar-Kanauj route via Mathura, Kanauj-Kashmir route via Panjaur, Thanesar, Jalandhara, Ballava (east of Jammu) and Rajauri, and Kanauj-Panipat route via Meerut connecting Haryana with other parts of India.

Although Al Biruni refers to the conditions prevailing in the first half of the 11th Century AD, there is every reason to believe that these routes, frequented by travellers, pilgrims, invading armies, traders and merchants, were in use from earlier days. The existence of one inland route linking Sugh with Mathura via Thanesar in the first half of the 7th Century AD is disclosed by the itinerary of Hiuen Tsang.

Thus Haryana with a network of roads, richness of soil, abundant agricultural produce, frequent visits of traders, merchants and others from different parts of India and a large number of urban centres does not present a dismal picture of trade and commercial inactivity from AD 600 to AD 1000.

Periodisation of Indian History

There is hardly any consensus among historians over the time that marks the termination and beginning of the ancient and medieval periods respectively of Indian history. RS Sharma[111] fixes the watershed between the periods in the 6th-7th Centuries AD, to which period are traceable in his opinion some marked changes in the political structure and the socioeconomic pattern of the Indian kingdoms. His arguments may be summed up as follows:

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1. The feudalisation of the state apparatus took deep root in the post-Gupta period.

2. The post-Gupta period saw the introduction of payment to government officers in land instead of money.

3. Trade declined from about the middle of the 6th Century AD.

4. There was a steady decay and disappearance of urban centres in the post-Gupta period.

5. Proliferation of castes was a striking social development from about the 7th Century AD onwards.

6. From the 6th-7th Centuries started the formation of cultural units such as Andhra, Assam, Bengal, Gujarat, Karnatak, Kerala, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

7. The 7th Century marks the beginnings of "regional languages".

8. A new age marked by regional styles in sculpture and construction of temples was ushered in in art and architecture.

9. *Pūjā, bhakti, tantra* and magic rites "which develop in medieval times and continue later" can be traced back to the 6th and 7th Centuries.

"Undoubtedly, the establishment of Turkish Muslim rule", says Sharma,[112] "introduced certain significant changes in the social, economic and political organisation of the country. But most features such as feudal state organisation, reversion to closed economy, proliferation of castes, regional identity in art, script and language, *pūjā, bhakti* and *tantra*, which develop in medieval times and continue later, can be traced back to the 6th and 7th centuries."

None of these suppositions however appears convincing. Apart from the questionable equation of the relations existing among the king, the feudatories and people as feudal, the suggested dates can hardly be upheld as forming a bridge between feudal and prefeudal society for the grant of land in which are noticed the symptoms of feudalism in India can be traced to much earlier times.

If statements are found in post-Gupta documents in support of the maintenance of state officers through landed property, there is no reason to believe that the system was introduced in this age. That the system of maintaining royal

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officers in this manner, prevalent in post-Gupta India, was the legacy of the earlier period is clearly borne out by Sircar:[113] "Early Indian kings paid *bhakta* (allowance) and *vetana* (wages) to lower classes of servants while the higher officers were maintained mostly by *jāgīrs*."

That this was a general practice followed from early times is indicated by the prescription of Manu and Kauṭilya. The Mahābhārata likewise speaks of the maintenance of high officers through landed property. Instances of payment being made in cash in post-Gupta India are not entirely unknown.

As known from Kalhaṇa's *Rājataraṅgiṇī* the court poet of Jayāpīḍa (close of the 8th Century AD) received a daily pay of a lakh of cowries while King Ananta of Kashmir paid daily 96 crores of cowries as salary to his officers. The practice of making regular payment to his troops by a 9th Century Rāṣṭrakūṭa king is possibly alluded to in the work of the Arab merchant Sulaiman.[114]

The hypothesis of a possible decline in trade from the 6th Century AD onwards has yet to be definitely established for we have evidences in support of India's trade relations with the Arab world and the countries in Southeast Asia. The fact that under the patronage of Khalif Almansur in the 7th Century AD the compilations of Caraka and Suśruta were translated into Arabic, coupled with the knowledge that the Arabs had acquired about 16 other works on Hindu medicine by AD 800 envisages close contact between India and the Arab countries.[115]

The far-flung campaigns of Sultan Mahmūd would have been impossible without an accurate knowledge of trade routes and resources of India, which he probably derived from Muslim merchants. Abu Zaid refers to the visit by Indian merchants in large numbers to Siraf, and there is also at least a 10th Century reference to Indian ships at Qulzum.

This was also the period when Indian sailors and merchants evinced keen interest in maritime relations with Southeast Asia. This is borne out by the unequivocal statement of Liang-shu[116] that central T'ien-chu had much sea trade among other countries with Fu-nan, Ji-nan and Kiau-chi, repeated references in story books to frequent voyages by Indian merchants to this region, and an inscription from Lobu Tuwa

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in Sumatra (AD 1088), referring to a community of Tamil merchants called the Five Hundred of the Thousand Quarters.[117]

Decay and disappearance of urban centres in the post-Gupta period is hardly compatible with Hiuen Tsang's description of several flourishing towns with quadrangular walls, broad and high, fortifying them in North India, and the foundation of towns in different parts of the country in the centuries that followed.

Vanarāja of the Cāpa dynasty founded the city of Anahilapaṭṭaka about the middle of the 8th Century, Lalitāditya of Kashmir founded a new capital called Parihāsapura which was adorned with magnificent buildings, Jayāpīḍa built the town of Jayapura, Avantīvarman that of Avantīpura, Sūra, a minister under Avantīvarman, founded Sūrapura and Suyya, another minister of Avantīvarman, built Suyyapura on the bank of the Vitastā.

The fortified cities of Citrakūṭa, Mandor, Kalanjar and Gwalior, which were hill fortresses, likewise deserve mention. References to different types of towns like *rājadhānīya, nagara, kevala-nagara, pura, nagarī, kheṭa, kharvaṭa, kubjaka* and *pattana* as found in texts like *Bṛhatsaṁhitā, Mānasāra, Yuktikalpataru* and *Samarāṅganasūtradhāra* militate against the hypothesis of shrinkage of urban centres in the post-Gupta period.

The proliferation of castes did not set in with the 7th Century AD onwards, the process having its beginnings in much earlier days. Recognition of about 60 castes and subcastes by Manu about the early centuries of the Christian era is a fact worth considering in this context.[118]

The postulation that with the 6th-7th Centuries AD the formation of cultural units like Andhra, Bengal, Tamil Nadu was ushered in is contrary to the generally agreed proposition that cultural unity is the offshoot of the coincidence of so many factors that develop quite independently in different areas and that these factors do not operate with the same force everywhere at a specific time. Formation of Tamil Nadu as a cultural unit may be traced back to the pre-Christian centuries while in the easterly states of Bengal, Orissa and Assam cultural unity grew and developed at a much later date with the origin and growth of vernacular literature.

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Writing about ancient Bengal, RC Majumdar[119] says: "That facts known so far do not encourage the belief that there was enough social solidarity or cultural homogeneity to foster a feeling of national unity in ancient Bengal. Socially and culturally, India was in the ancient and medieval periods divided horizontally rather than vertically, and a Brāhmaṇa of Bengal felt and consciously maintained greater affinity with a Brāhmaṇa of Upper India than with a member of a lower caste in his own province." What applies to Bengal also applies to North India.

It is likewise difficult to subscribe to the view ascribing the beginnings of regional languages in India to the 7th Century. The beginning of written Tamil literature is traced back to the 2nd or 1st Century BC,[120] while that of Kannaḍa literature is assigned to the 4th or 5th Century AD.[121] The origin of Bengali, Assamese and Oriya is traced to the *Caryā-padas* which, according to the generally accepted view, are assigned to the period between AD 950 and 1200.[122]

The veracity of the hypothesis that speaks of the introduction of regional styles in sculptures and architecture about the 6th and 7th Centuries AD may also be called in question. Regional and local variations were also manifest in Indian art in the earlier epochs although they became much more pronounced from about the beginning of the 9th, and seldom from the 6th, Century AD. It is worth remembering that the art of North India from AD 800 to 1300, notwithstanding regional and local variations, continued to have a common denominator.[123]

The assumption that *Pūjā* originated in the 6th and 7th Centuries AD is hardly compatible with the presence of a Śaiva shrine on the coins of the early Audumbara chiefs, remnants of a temple at Besnagar, assignable to the middle of the 2nd Century BC and some definite references to the construction of temples in honour of gods and goddesses.

Of such numerous inscriptions mention may be made of the Ghosundi stone inscription of King Sarvatāta referring to the construction of a stone enclosure for the place of worship of the gods Saṁkarṣaṇa and Vāsudeva (*pūjā-śilāprā-kāro Nārāyaṇa-vāṭakā*) in the 1st Century BC, Tosham inscription of the early Gupta period mentioning a Vaiṣṇava shrine

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at Tosham, and Gangdhara (Jhalawar district, Rajasthan) inscription[124] of AD 423 recording the construction of a Vaiṣṇava temple by Mayūrarakṣaka.

Patañjali (c 150 BC) refers to the temples of Rāma and Keśava where musical instruments were sounded at gatherings. The origin of the doctrine of *bhakti* likewise goes back to earlier days. Pāṇini, who in all probability lived in the 5th or 4th Century BC, refers to the *bhaktas* of Vāsudeva and Arjuna.

The Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, which has been assigned to the 4th-3rd Centuries BC, "pours its loving admiration on Rudra-Śiva" and prescribes "self-surrender to the god who makes himself manifest in one's own intelligence." The Bhagavad-Gītā, composed by the end of the 2nd Century AD at the latest, stresses the *bhakti* form of *sādhanā* which leads to the attainment of the highest goal.

The belief that Tantrism originated in the 7th-8th Centuries AD is equally untenable. The Kubjikāmata Tantra, the earliest available Tantric manuscript, is written in the later Gupta characters of about the 6th-7th Centuries, thereby implying an earlier origin for Tantric practices. The Gangdhara stone inscription of AD 423 mentions the term *tantra* and the rites associated with the Ḍākinīs, female ghouls, in the temple of the Divine Mothers.[125] M. Eliade[126] refers to numerous Tantric texts which are believed to have been composed in the 4th-5th Centuries AD.

An attempt may now be made to determine when the medieval period began in Indian history and to find out how this term may apply to India. Medievalism once carried with it a definite concept, a concept of degeneration and decadence, and the term medieval was applied to Europe from the downfall of the Roman Empire in the 5th Century AD to the Renaissance which became intense in the 15th and 16th Centuries on the ground that this was the age when conservatism triumphed over originality and rationality was superseded by ecclesiastical sentiments.

But the concept of medievalism in the sense of a dark age proved wrong in the case of Europe. "However indigenous the expressions of political, social, literary and artistic life were, they flourished in an atmosphere of self-consciousness.

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They were not all spontaneous and were rarely 'artless'. The results were naturally varied, some bizarre and grotesque with the seeds of decadence in them, some simple and effortless, some extraordinarily beautiful, some foolish, others profound, some pagan, others Christian."[127]

Similarly, the so-called medieval period of Indian history can hardly be reckoned as a dark phase when the creative impulses of the people at large were at work in various domains like architecture, religion and literature and the process of thesis, antithesis and synthesis of contrary cultures and ideas gained momentum.

If the definition of medieval society as a "sedentary society, throwing off a continuous stream of wanderers, a conventional society ruled by custom yet indulging in all sorts of adventures of the spirit, a pagan society responsive at every turn to the teaching of the Christian religion"[128] be accepted as authoritative, there would remain hardly any room for the ancient period in historic India, for the characteristics that are supposed to be medieval are noticeable in Indian society in lesser or greater degree ever since the days of the Dharmasūtras.

Judged in this context, the term medieval becomes a misnomer in Indian history, and it is only in its primary connotation of being in the middle, hemmed in between the ancient and the modern, that the term has a claim to its usage in periodising Indian history.

Supposing that medieval, in the Indian context, has only relative chronological import, the question when the medieval period commenced remains unanswered. The 6th and 7th Centuries AD marked in no way a striking departure from the previous centuries or were significantly distinct from a couple of centuries that followed.

Pronounced changes were brought about in the social, cultural and political life of the Indian people with the Muslim invasions, but this being a gradual and prolonged process which operated first in Sind in the 8th Century AD, spread to West and Northwest India by the 10th, overran North India by the 12th and engulfed South India by the end of AD 1300, no single date of its commencement, with uniform application to India in its entirety, can ever be suggested.

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The medieval period did not begin simultaneously everywhere in India, being interlinked with the gradual spread of Islam through the centuries. The coincidence between the spread of Islam and commencement of the medieval period does not necessarily mean that Islam ended the predominance of Hinduism in the life of the common people or that in medieval India the lifestyle of the masses was pan-Islamic. It simply heralded the introduction of an alien force to a two-way process of interplay of the Brahmanical or Sastric and local or folk traditions which Indian society had experienced from the early Vedic period onwards.

It is however admitted that such a date for the commencement of the medieval period is questionable on the ground that this scheme is not entirely based on sequence of time as implied by the term medieval. In such an instance even the most precise date, calculated today scientifically, will appear increasingly outmoded with the passage of time. As marking the beginning of the medieval period AD 1000 may be suggested—a date that is arbitrary but convenient.[129]

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1. *Political History of Ancient India* (Calcutta, 1953), p 1.
2. *The Cambridge History of India* (First Indian Reprint, 1955), I, p 74.
3. The Sarasvatī, which according to the Rgveda (VII.95.1-2), was the largest and purest of all Indian rivers, flowing from the mountains to the ocean (*yāti giribhya ā-samudrāt*), is probably the modern Sarsuti, which flows through Kurukshetra and Pehoa and unites with a bigger stream, the Ghaggar.

4a. It is argued that the history of this region goes back to a much earlier epoch than the time of the Purus, who have been regarded by some archeologists, on the basis of the supposed Akkadian termination *u* of their name, as hailing from among the Kaśśi aristocracy of Babylonia (Indras, *Lost Sarasvatī*, 1967, p 64). Indras (ibid, p 66) has advanced the view that between 2300 BC and 1700 BC the Indo-Sarasvatī basin was occupied by a pre-Vedic Indo-Aryan people who spoke an archaic form of the old Indo-Aryan language.

4b. *PHAI*, p 23.

5. *Ancient Indian Historical Traditions*, 1962, p 111.

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6. *PHAI*, p 25.
7. I.3.1.
8. IV.20.1.
9. H Siddhānta Vāgīśa, *Mahābhāratam*, II, p 273.
10. According to *Bhārata-Kaumudī* Rohitaka denotes a mountain (*Rohitakaṁ parvataṁ*).
11. *Lost Sarasvatī*, 1967, p 92.
12. IV.1.178; V.3.117.
13. 1.1.15.
14. 2.21. It is interesting to note that the same region is designated as Antarvedī in *Kāvyamīmāṁsā* of Rājaśekhara (*Vinaśana-Prayāgayoḥ Gaṅgā-Yamunayoś-c-āntaraṁ-Antarvedī*).
15. The location of Vinaśana still remains a baffling question. it is sometimes located at Hanumangarh in Rajasthan. Indras (*op cit*, p 92) places it round about Derawar Fort in Cholistan (Bahawalpur, Pakistan).
16. 2.19.
17. 2.20.
18. VII.193.
19. Commenting on the origin of the biographical writings in India, VS Pathak (*Ancient Historians of India*, 1966, p 21) observes: "The history of biographical writing in India may be traced to the *Buddhacarita* and further to the *Rāmāyaṇa* and the *ākhyānas* of Vedic literature. But never before the early medieval age were attempts made to write the biographies of intimately known contemporary kings. It seems that Bāṇabhaṭṭa initiated in the first quarter of the 7th century a series of biographies by writing the *Harṣacarita*. If earlier texts of this kind existed, we have no evidence of them."
20. It is generally believed that *Harṣacarita* is fragmentary, on the ground that it does not deal with the complete life of Harṣa but stops after the union of Harşa with Rājyaśrī. This view is contradicted by Pathak (*AHI*, pp 30-31) who says: "An investigation into the purpose and form of the narrative would have at once indicated that the poet-historian had all along been working to achieve this end—the meeting of the king with Rājyaśrī. Moreover, there is definite evidence that the *Harṣacarita* is a complete and finished product of art. Bāṇa never intended to write further beyond this stage . . . Further, in accordance with the technique of Indian dramas, this part was originally designed, falling into five well-defined stages of the Beginning, the Efforts, the Hope of Achieving the End, the Certainty of Success and the End. Since the last stage of the End is reached with the recovery of Rājyaśrī—the royal glory, the story is complete."
21. The origin of the word Sthāṇvīśvara or Sthāneśvara is uncertain but it is not unlikely that the term was derived from *sthāna*, abode, and *Iśvara*, Mahādeva, or *sthāṇu* and *Iśvara*, or *sthāṇu* and *sar*, lake.
22. Pp 83 ff.
23. Pp 101 ff.
24. RC Majumdar, *The Classical Age*, p 97.
25. Ibid, pp 97-8.
26. P 178.
27. P 187.
28. P 211.
29. XXXIX, 152-53, 156.
30. *Kumārikākhaṇḍam*, 51, 90.
31. D Sharma, *Early Chauhan Dy-*

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nasties, 1959, p 92.
32. Ibid, p 60.
33. Ibid, p 60.
34. It is suggested on convincing grounds that the work was composed between AD 119 and AD 1193, dates of the two battles of Tarain.
35. As pointed out by AK Vyas (*EI*, XXVI, p 87), the authenticity and the antiquity of this work have often been questioned by competent authorities, including VA Smith (*JASB*, 1881, p 29) who says that "the Chanda's *Rāesa*, as we now have it, is misleading, and all but worthless for the purposes of the historian."
36. I, p 213; IV, pp 252, 256 and 260.
37. PTS edition, p 225.
38. RC Majumdar, *The Classical Accounts of India* (Calcutta, 1960), p 128.
39. Ibid, p 172.
40. Ibid, p 371.
41. *Journal Asiatique*, 1915, p 91; S Chattopadhyaya, *Early History of North India*, 1968, p 110.
42. James Legge, *The Travels of Fa-hien*, 1971, pp 41-42.
43. *The Classical Age*, p 100.
44. Samuel Beal, *Travels of Hiouen-Thsang*, II, p 215.
45. Ibid, p 217.
46. *The Classical Age*, pp 124-26; RS Tripathi, *History of Kanauj* (Bombay, 1959), pp 188-90.
47. *The Classical Age*, 1954, p 124.
48. John Briggs, *History of the Rise of the Mohamedan Power in India*, I, p 52.
49. Ibid, p 53.
50. *The Journal of the Numismatic Society of India*, XXVIII, p 113.
51. Allan, *Catalogue of the Coins of Ancient India in the British Museum* (London, 1936), pp clvii-clviii, 282-83; *BSOS*, X, p 279; *JNSI*, IV, pp 49 ff.
52. *Studies in Indian Coins*, p 214.
53. Ibid, p 214.
54. Ibid, p 214. There are several instances of the mention of tutelary deities on certain early Indian coin types (*SIC*, pp 211 ff).
55. DC Sircar (*SIC*, p 213) points out that the place was really called Agra, which afterwards came to be known as Agrodaka "owing to the existence of a tank."
56. *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p 111.
57. Ibid, p 111.
58. S Chattopadhyaya, *Early History of Northern India* (Calcutta, 1968), p 49.
59. *SIC*, p 213.
60. *CHI*, II, pp 110-11.
61. *The Age of Imperial Unity*, p 167.
62. *Ancient Indian Numismatics*, p 222.
63. *Studies in Indian Coins*, p 213.
64. *Ancient Indian Numismatics*, pp 186-87.
65. *JNSI*, XXVII, p 86.
66. B Chattopadhyay, *The Age of the Kushanas*, 1967, p 233.
67. *JNSI*, XXVII, p 86.
68. Ibid, XV, p 68.
69. Ibid, p 69.
70. AS Altekar, *The Coinage of the Gupta Empire* (Banaras, 1957), p 309.
71. *JNSI*, XXVI, pp 40 ff.
72. *JRAS*, 1906, p 847.
73. Ibid, 1909, pp 446 ff.
74. SP Sen edited, *Sources of the History of India* (Calcutta, 1979), Vol II, p 123.
75. *JNSI*, XXVII, pp 103 ff.
76. *Early Medieval Coin-Types of*

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Northern India, pp 40-41.

77. Ibid, p 42.
78. *JNSI*, XXVII, pp 41-45.
79. RD Banerji, *Prācīna Mudrā*, pp 202-03.
80. *Chronicles of the Pathan Kings of Delhi*, p 61.
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84. Ibid, pp 270-73.
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86. Ibid, XVI, p 122.
87. *SIC*, p 233.
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89. Ibid, p 105.
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91. *EI*, I, pp 186 and 188.
92. Ibid, pp 242 ff.
93. Ibid, p 244.
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95. *EI*, XXVI, pp 84 ff.
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97. This has been discovered from Boher in Rohtak district. *JASB*, XLIII, pp 104-10; *EI*, V, Appendix, p 34.
98. Shihab-ud-dīn Ghūrī.
99. Qutb-ud-dīn Aibak.
100. Shams-ud-dīn Iltutmish.
101. Rukn-ud-dīn Fīrūz.
102. Kasinath Pandurang Parab edited, *Harshacharita* (Bombay, 1912), pp 94-95.
103. Thomas Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels in India*, pp 314-16.
104. *EI*, I, p 184.
105. Ibid, p 185.
106. This is suggested by the discovery of a clay sealing at Daulatpur bearing the legend *Sthāneśvarasya* in early Gupta characters.
107. Utbi, *Tarikh-i-Yamini*, p 140. This and other chronicles like Baihaki's *Tarikh-us-Subuktigin* (c AD 1059) and Khondmir's *Habib-us-Siyar* (c AD 1529) deal with Sultan Mahmūd's Indian campaigns. The account of these texts in most instances revolves on the history of the establishment and expansion of Muslim rule in India.
108. Elliot and Dowson edited, *Alberuni's Tarikh-ul-Hind*, p 62.
109. HG Raverty, *Tabaqat-i-Nasiri* (Delhi, 1970), p 220.
110. DC Sircar, *The Emperor and the Subordinate Rulers* (Santiniketan, 1982), pp 81-82.
111. *The Indian Historical Review*, Vol I, No I, pp 1-9. Devangana Desai (*Erotic Sculpture of India*, New Delhi, 1975, pp 146-48) fixes the watershed between the ancient and the medieval around AD 500.
112. "Problems of Transition from Ancient to Medieval in Indian History" in *The Indian Historical Review*, Vol I, No I, p 9.
113. DC Sircar, *op cit*, p 94.
114. Ibid, p 48.
115. Brijnarain Sharma, *Social Life in Northern India* (Delhi, 1966), p 336.
116. L Gopal, *The Economic Life of Northern India* (Banaras, 1965), p 136.
117. Ibid, p 140.
118. *Adhyāya* X.
119. *History of Ancient Bengal* (Calcutta, 1971), p 466.
120. KA Nilkanta Sastri, *A Comprehensive History of India*, II, p 669.
121. RC Majumdar, *The Age of Imperial Kanauj* (Bombay, 1955), p 222.

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122. RC Majumdar, *History of Ancient Bengal* (Calcutta, 1971), pp 393-94.
123. G. Subbiah, "Medieval Trends in Indian Architecture" in the *Journal of Ancient Indian History*, XII (1978-79), p 13.
124. *Corpus Inscriptionum Indicarum*, III, p 72.
125. Ibid, p 78.
126. *Yoga: Immortality and Freedom* (1958), pp 400-01.
127. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol 15 (1969), p 404.
128. Ibid, p 404.
129. On the periodisation of Indian history DC Sircar says in *Indian Civilization: The First Phase* edited by SC Malik (Simla, 1971, pp 31-32): "So far as Ancient India is concerned, we can probably regard the period to be covered by it to begin from the earliest times down to c 1200 AD for North India and c 1300 AD for South India, these dates being roughly associated with the Turkish Muslim conquest respectively of the northern and southern regions of our country." The Indian History Congress originally started with regarding the ancient period of India as ending in c AD 1200, then shifted the date back to AD 650, and finally reverted to the earlier date of AD 1200. A Ghosh (SC Malik edited, *op cit*, p 40) believes that if "developments and continuity of philosophical and religious thoughts be of any consideration, the period should be brought down to comparatively recent times." The linguists, who follow a different principle of periodisation, introduce the Vedic period (c 1500-600 BC) as ancient, the Classical Sanskrit (including Pali and Prākṛt) period (600 BC-AD 1000) as medieval and the period of the vernaculars (AD 1000-up to date) as modern. PB Desai (SC Malik edited, *op cit*, p 104) is inclined to extend the ancient period in the South up to the middle of the 16th Century. Baidyanath Saraswati (ibid, pp 100-03) on the basis of socio-religious movements in India has fixed the ancient period from 2500 BC to the 12th Century AD when Rāmānuja turned "a new leaf in Indian social and cultural life by introducing the *bhakti* philosophy of Vaiṣṇavism. BD Chattopadhyaya (ibid, 95) accepts AD 600 as the *terminus ad quem* of the ancient period, and yet he believes "what followed the Gupta period was, with exceptions, a repetitiveness which drew on the image that had already developed and matured in the Gupta period" (ibid, p 94). BN Mukherjee (ibid, pp 98-99) extends the ancient period from the Harappan civilisation to about the end of the 12th Century AD. KM Munshi (*The Age of Imperial Kanauj*, Bombay, 1955, p xxiii) believes that with the close of the 10th Century AD ancient India ended and medieval India began.

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THE RĀMAGUPTA PROBLEM

Evidence of Devī-Candraguptam

The name of a Gupta prince, Rāmagupta, was first brought to light by a few extracts from Viśākhadatta's[1] lost historical drama, *Devī-Candraguptam*, quoted in *Nāṭyadarpaṇa* by Rāmacandra and Guṇacandra, who flourished in the 12th Century AD and *Śṛṅgāra-prakāśa* by King Bhoja of Dhārā, assigned to the first half of the 11th Century AD.

The fragments thus preserved say that King Rāmagupta sustained a humiliating defeat at the hands of a Śaka chief to whom he agreed to surrender his Queen Dhruvadevī. Rāmagupta's younger brother Candragupta II, who opposed such an act of cowardice, disguised himself as the queen and killed the Śaka king while the latter was about to embrace him. Sometime later Candragupta killed his brother, married his widow and seized his kingdom.

Supplementary Accounts

It is rather unfortunate that some prominent Indologists appear to be loath to accept the genuineness of the Rāmagupta legend, as narrated in *Devī-Candraguptam*. S Sylvain Levi,[2] for instance, has dismissed the whole account as unreliable and baseless. A similar opinion on the merit of the text as a source of history was expressed by HC Raychaudhuri[3] when he observed, "The *Devī-Candraguptam* and similar works are as much unsuited to form the basis of the chronicles of Candragupta II as the *Mudrārākṣasa* and the *Aśokāvadāna* are in regard to the doings of the great Mauryas."

It has to be admitted that in respect of authenticity and reliability the work of Viśākhadatta does not bear comparison

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with *Rājatarangiṇī*, composed by Kalhaṇa in the 12th Century, for while the historian is an observer, the dramatist is prone to be imaginative and creative. Not unoften a dramatist builds up his superstructure of embellishment and fancy upon a solid base of facts of sober history.

As one turns to the above account of Viśākhadatta about the activities of the Gupta monarchs one finds to one's great astonishment its corroboration, direct or otherwise, in some literary texts and inscriptional records. *Harṣacarita*[4] of Bāṇa states that "Candragupta, in the guise of a female, killed the Śaka king, possessed of lust for another's wife at the very city of the enemy" (*para-kalatra-kāmukaṁ kāminī-veśa-Guptaś-Candraguptaḥ Śaka-patim-aśātayat*).

Murder of the Śaka king at the hands of Candragupta II is thus corroborated, although the identity of the woman for whose sake the murder was planned and executed is left untold. Śaṅkarārya,[5] while commenting on *Harṣacarita*, supplements Bāṇa's statement by adding that the Śaka enemy who longed for Dhruvadevī was killed in private by Candragupta, disguised as Dhruvadevī, and his men, dressed as women (*Candragupta-bhrātṛjāyāṁ Dhruvadevīṁ prārthayamānaś-Candraguptena Dhruvadevī-veśa-dhāriṇā strī-veśa-jana-parivṛtena vyāpāditaḥ*).

Śaṅkarārya's version supplements Bāṇa's statement and is in accord with the story, as narrated in *Devī-Candraguptam*. Rājaśekhara[6] in his *Kāvya-mīmāṁsā* cites a verse, recording the surrender of Queen Dhruvasvāminī by her husband named Śarmagupta to an enemy who had besieged his dominions. The name Śarmagupta appears to be the copyists' mistake for Rāmagupta.

There is therefore no discrepancy in the accounts of Viśākhadatta, Bāṇa, Śaṅkarārya and Rājaśekhara that speak of the longing of a Śaka king for Dhruvadevī and the ultimate death of the former at the hands of her brother-in-law Candragupta. That Dhruvadevī later married Candragupta II appears clear from epigraphs which represent her as the crowned queen of the latter. Candragupta II's marriage with Dhruvadevī was possible only after the death of Rāmagupta, and as Viśākhadatta would have us believe, Rāmagupta was killed by his younger brother.

This appears to be corroborated by the statement in the

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Sanjan plates[7] of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa King Amoghavarṣa I of AD 870, which says that "that donor in the Kali age, who was of Gupta lineage, having killed his brother, we are told, seized (his) kingdom and queen" (*Hatvā bhrātaram-eva rājyam-ahar-ad-devīṁ ca dīnas-tathā/ lakṣaṁ koṭīm-alekhayat-kila kalau dātā sa Gupt-ānvayaḥ//*).

A similar account[8] is recorded in the Cambay (AD 930) and Sangali plates (AD 933) of the Rāṣṭrakūṭa King Govinda IV, alluding to the murder of his elder brother by a king called Sāhasāṅka and his marrying the widow. The fratricide is named Sāhasāṅka, but when we remember that *Vikrama*, either by itself or in conjunction with other words like *-ajita*, *-siṁha*, *-cakra* and *-aṅka*, was the invariable epithet of Candragupta II on his coins it may not be incorrect to suggest that he was Candragupta II himself.

The evidence of the Cambay and Sangali plates need not be emphasised too much since the identification of the fratricide of the records with Candragupta II is, we admit, tentative. The author of *Mujmalu-t-Tawārīkh*,[9] a work composed in the early 12th Century AD, knows of the tragic end of Rawwāl (Rāmagupta) and relates how he, in the very presence of the queen, was stabbed to death by Barkamāris (Vikramārka) in the garb of a mendicant in the precincts of a royal palace.

Custom of Devara Marriage

Sircar[10] does not believe in the historicity of the Rāmagupta legend, for according to him the custom of marrying the elder brother's widow was not prevalent in the 4th Century AD when Candragupta II ruled. Viśākhadatta might have been influenced, Sircar would have us believe, by such evidence as Sītā's suspicion that Lakṣmaṇa intended marrying her if Rāma died, Sugrīva's marriage with his brother Vālin's widow Tārā, and Vibhīṣaṇa's marriage with his brother Rāvaṇa's widow Mandodarī.

To suppose that Candragupta II married his widowed sister-in-law Dhruvadevī does not however appear absurd proposition. Remarriage of the widow with her brother-in-law is mentioned in the Ṛgveda[11] and Atharvaveda,[12] and Candragupta II in her marriage with Dhruvadevī might have

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owed his inspiration to the Vedic source, the authenticity of which was irrevocable.

Repeated mention of the statement that "a woman, in the absence of the husband, accepts her brother-in-law as her husband" (*Nārī tu paty-abhāve vai devaraṁ kurute patiṁ/ Pṛthivī brāhmaṇ-ābhāve kṣatriyaṁ kurute patiṁ*) in the didactic parts of the Mahābhārata[13] would allude to the prevalence of the *devara* marriage at the time of the final compilation of the great epic.

Yājñavalkya,[14] who appears to have flourished in the Gupta age, refers to the *Punarbhūs*[15] and their sons, *Paunarbhavas*.[16] The *Punarbhūs* likewise find mention in the writings of the later *Dharmaśāstra* writers like Nārada[17] who has categorised them in three groups:

(i) those whose hands were taken in marriage but whose marriage was not consummated;

(ii) those who first deserted their husbands, betook themselves to other men and subsequently returned to the houses of their husbands; and

(iii) those who were given by their husbands' relatives to the *sapiṇḍas* of the dead husbands or to persons of the same caste in the absence of brothers-in-law.

A positive reference to *devara* marriage is further made by Nārada[18] when he states that a woman who on the death of her husband rejects her brother-in-law or other relatives but unites herself with a stranger through lust belongs to the second type of wanton women (*Mṛte bhartari sam-prāptān devar-ādīn-apāsya yā/ Up-āgacchet param kāmāt sā dvitīyā pra-kīrttitā//*).

The question of *niyoga* does not arise here, for the woman Nārada speaks of is not described as *niyuktā* or appointed by her husband or elders for the purpose of bearing a child. Mention may also be made in this connection of a verse in the works of Nārada[19] and Parāśara[20] allowing remarriage of women in five calamities, as when the husband is missing or dead, has become a religious ascetic, is impotent or fallen (*Naṣṭe mṛte pravrajite klībe ca patite patau/ Pañcasv-āpatsu nārīṇāṁ patir-anyo vidhīyate//*).

With the death of Rāmagupta were removed all the obstacles that might have stood in the way of Candragupta II's

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marriage to his sister-in-law Dhruvadevī. It is worth remembering that the practice of a younger brother-in-law marrying the widow of his elder brother persists among some castes to this day.

Criticism of Jai Prakash's View

Jai Prakash[21] identifies Candragupta of the Rāmagupta legend with Samudragupta, Dhruvadevī with Dattadevī, and Rāmagupta with Kāca, who was either an actual brother or a close relative of Samudragupta. The arguments he advanced are as follows:

1. The benevolence and charity of Samudragupta are emphasised in his records as well as in those of his successors and the Vākāṭakas but Candragupta II is never applauded for his munificence in the inscriptions of his family or in those of the Vākāṭakas.

2. The Eran inscription says that Samudragupta paid the bride price of Dattadevī in the form of valour, thus implying that the role of Dhruvadevī of the Rāmagupta legend was in fact played by Samudragupta's chief queen Dattadevī, who is significantly described as a devoted and chaste *kula-vadhū*.

3. Candragupta II's victory over the Śakas was achieved between c AD 388 and c AD 409 when he was too old to marry himself.

4. Candragupta II could disguise himself as a beautiful young queen. At the time of his accession in c AD 375 he was at least 40 years old.

5. Dhruvadevī, the chief queen of Candragupta II, married the Gupta monarch long before AD 355 when Prabhāvatīguptā was born from Kuveranāgā.

6. Candragupta II, who was nominated for the Gupta throne by his father, assumed power unchallenged, but Samudragupta's accession to the throne was opposed by many rivals of equal birth (*tulya-kulajāḥ*).

7. The titles *Parākramaḥ* and *Vikramaḥ* were assumed on their coins by Samudragupta and Candragupta II respectively, and since these are near synonyms the later generations might have confused the two kings signified by these titles.

8. Samudragupta adopted the title of *Vikramaḥ* or *Vikramāditya* towards the close of his reign, and the assump-

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tion of the same title by him and his son gave rise to the confusion of the identity of the two kings.

Jai Prakash,[22] accordingly, concludes: "Hence the later legends connected with the name of Rāmagupta and Candragupta possibly rose from a confusion between Samudragupta and Candragupta. The former of these, Samudragupta, was possibly the main and original personality involved in the original historical event, dramatised later."

A close and critical study of the Gupta and Vākāṭaka inscriptions would however reveal that the arguments advanced by Jai Prakash are far from conclusive.

Samudragupta's philanthropic activities are mentioned only in the Allahabad pillar inscription, and not in other Gupta or Vākāṭaka records. The reference to Samudragupta's generosity in his own record, which is labelled a royal *praśasti* composed by an officer of the Gupta court, need not be overemphasised for corroborative evidence in the form of positive information has still to be found.

Candragupta II is on the other hand eulogised in the Poona[23] and Rithpur[24] copper plate grants of the Vākāṭaka Queen Prabhāvatīguptā as a great donor of gold and cows[25] (*aneka-go-hiraṇya-koṭi-sahasra-prada-parama-bhāgavato mahārāj-ādhirāja-śrī-Candraguptasya*), whose fame spread far and wide[26] (*catur-udadhi-sali-svādita-yaśa*).

Mention in the Vākāṭaka grants of the munificence of Candragupta II appears to be corroborated by the Udayagiri cave inscription[27] of Vīrasena Śāva (*Tasya rāj-ādhirājarṣer-acintyo'jjala-karmmaṇaḥ*).

It may also be noted in this connection that the number, types and sub-varieties of gold coins of Candragupta II far outnumber those of Samudragupta. The suggestion, which was mooted by Altekar and endorsed later on by Jai Prakash,[28] that the Aśvamedha coins of Samudragupta were struck to be given away as *dakṣiṇā* to the officiating priests is not supported by any positive evidence.

The supposed statement of the Eran inscription that Samudragupta paid the bride price of Dattadevī in the form of valour does not necessarily imply that the Gupta king forcibly carried her away from the house of her first husband. Dattadevī would have been carried away while she was still

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a virgin or Samudragupta might have won her for his deed of prowess (*vīrya-śulkam*) at the *svayaṁvara* (assembly) summoned by the bride's guardians.

Secondly, it is doubtful whether the Eran inscription contains any reference to Samudragupta's chief queen Dattadevī at all. To quote the relevant verse of the inscription (*Dattā*)*sya pauruṣa-parakkrama-datta-śulkā* (*Hastya*)*śva-ratna-dhana-dhānya-samṛddhi-yuktā*.

Although the name of Dattadevī is not found in the verse in its present state of preservation, the reading *Dattā*, giving the name of the queen, has been tentatively proposed to fill the lacuna at the beginning of line 17.

The proposed reading *Dattā* does not suit the expression *hasty-aśva-ratna-dhana-dhānya-samṛddhi-yuktā*, which has to be applied to Dattadevī. The significance of this expression is fully revealed if *Dattā* be replaced by *Śrīra* (*Śrīḥ*+*asya*= *Śrīrasya*). The verse would then refer to the goddess Lakṣmī, also called Śrī, the presiding deity of abundance and prosperity.

Representation of Lakṣmī as the royal consort is found not unoften in Indian inscriptions, including the records of the Imperial Guptas. Such a suggestion appears quite reasonable when it is remembered that only names and titles of chief queens are recorded in Gupta inscriptions.

It is true that Candragupta II's victory over the Kṣatrapas of Gujarat and Western Malwa took place sometime after AD 388, the latest known date of the last Kṣatrapa Rudrasiṁha III. But the identity of the Śakas mentioned in *Devī-Candraguptam* with those of Western India is by no means definite.

The Śaka king, who in all probability was killed by Candragupta II about the beginning of his reign, appears to have been a scion of the house of King Śrīdharavarman, whose inscriptions have been found at Kanakhera, near Sanchi, and Eran, or a descendant of Kings Īśvaramitra and Siṁhaśrīsena, known from an inscribed clay sealing discovered at Eran.

The narrative of Viśākhadatta implies that the kingdoms of Rāmagupta and the Śaka king were coterminus. It is difficult to believe that at the time of his accession to the

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throne Candragupta II had already passed the stage of marrying, for he does not seem to be as old as Majumdar and Jai Prakash suggest. The Śakas are mentioned in the Allahabad *praśasti* as subordinate allies of Samudragupta and there is not even the slightest indication that they had ever been involved in an actual encounter.

Candragupta II launched his campaign against the Śakas of western India quite late in his reign, but the Rāmagupta legend refers to an earlier Scythian incursion that coincided with the assumption of power by Candragupta at Pāṭaliputra consequent upon his father's death when he was not too old to disguise himself as a beautiful and young queen.

The argument that Dhruvadevī was married to Candragupta II long before AD 355 is based on the equation that the hundredth year of his daughter Prabhāvatīguptā corresponded with AD 455, by which date Kumāragupta I was succeeded on the imperial throne by Skandagupta. The belief that Prabhāvatīguptā lived for more than 100 years is based on the expression *s-āgra-varṣa-śata-diva(jīva)-putra-pautrā*, applied to her in the Rithpur copper plate grant of her son Pravarasena II.

Although the genuineness of the statement has been conceded both by Majumdar and Jai Prakash, an account of the age of Prabhāvatīguptā need not be taken literally for the reason that the 19th regnal year of Pravarasena II[29] would be equivalent to about his 40th year (as he must have ascended the throne immediately after the attainment of maturity at about the age of 21), when the queen-mother Prabhāvatīguptā was more than 100 years old. This would lead one to the absurd proposition that Prabhāvatīguptā gave birth to her son Pravarasena II when she was in her sixties.

It is also not unlikely that *s-āgra-varṣa-śata*, indicating long life, is interconnected with *jīva-putra-pautrā*, meaning "having living sons and grandsons", and the whole expression would accordingly imply "who has sons and grandsons who (it is hoped) will live for a full hundred years."[30]

Samudragupta's accession to the throne was no doubt opposed by rivals of equal birth, but there is no positive evidence in favour of their success in occupying his kindom or even a part of it. The very fact that of all the imperial Gupta monarchs Candragupta II alone is publicly acclaimed

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as selected by his father (*tad-pāda-parigṛhīta*) would create the impression that his authority did not meet with approval in all parts of the dominions over which his father had previously ruled.

Samudragupta and Candragupta II adopted on their coins the titles *Parākramaḥ* and *Vikramaḥ* respectively, but generally speaking these titles occur on the reverse while the obverse is occupied by a legend, giving the personal name of the issuer, thus eradicating the possibility of their wrong identification with each other by people, contemporary or later. It is further difficult to concede that the titles outlived the very names of their bearers.

If it is conceded that Samudragupta adopted the title Vikramaḥ towards the closing years of his reign, it is nevertheless difficult to believe, as pointed out earlier, that whereas their names had passed into the veil of oblivion the titles alone survived. It is moreover not definite that Samudragupta had ever assumed this title, for this title, as applied to him, is so far known from the solitary Bamnala coin which may be due to a mistake committed early in the reign of Candragupta II, "the obverse die of the Standard type of the late king was by oversight used along with a reverse die of one of the varieties of the archer type of the new king."[31] The Gupta kings had usually one *biruda* only, and the Allahabad inscription, issued towards the end of his reign, expressly says that Parākramaḥ was the special *biruda* of Samudragupta.

As is evident from the foregoing discussions, some sober facts of history lie embedded in the Rāmagupta legend. This does not necessarily imply that whatever Viśākhadatta says is true, but the facts about the Śaka invasion of Rāmagupta's dominions, his defeat at the hands of the invader, his agreement to surrender Dhruvadevī, murder of the Śaka king by Candragupta II, Candragupta II's occupation of his brother's kingdom and his marriage with his widowed sister-in-law may be treated as genuine.

Notwithstanding the assertion of Viśākhadatta to the contrary, it does not appear at all likely that Rāmagupta had succeeded Samudragupta on the imperial throne, but what seems to be more probable, in view of all the evidence at our disposal, is that he ruled over a part, most probably parts, of

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eastern Malwa, on the frontiers of the Gupta Empire and posed a challenge to the authority of his younger but worthier brother Candragupta II who was the *de jure* successor of Samudragupta on the imperial throne.

The estranged relations between the two, coupled with the death of Samudragupta, gave the Śakas the golden opportunity to invade Rāmagupta's kingdom. It was the irony of fate that Rāmagupta was saved from the Scythian menace but, unfortunate as he was, he met his doom at the very hands of the saviour.

Evidence of Coins

Leaving aside the literary and epigraphic evidences, we may now turn to the testimony of coins for their bearing, if there be any, upon the Rāmagupta problem. The attention of the world of scholars to the so-called Rāmagupta coins was first drawn by PL Gupta[32] who had reported the discovery of such six copper coins from Bhilsa, now named Vidisha, in Madhya Pradesh. HV Trivedi[33] has reported the discovery of some more copper coins of Rāmagupta from the same site.

Talbehat,[34] a small town in Jhansi district, Uttar Pradesh, has yielded a solitary copper coin of Rāmagupta. A large number of copper coins of Rāmagupta were later unearthed at Eran[35] and Vidisha.[36] Discovery of coins bearing the name of Rāmagupta proves the historicity of a king of the same name who, to suggest from the provenances of his coins and inscriptions,[37] was in charge of the Eran-Vidisha region of eastern Malwa. Unfortunately, the identity of Rāmagupta of eastern Malwa forms a subject of keen controversy among numismatists, and the three principal views on this issue may be stated below:

First, Rāmagupta, as suggested by AK Narain,[38] who was a local ruler around Vidisha, flourished in the early part of the 4th Century AD. This view is based on the argument that the form of *gu*, as found on the coins of Rāmagupta, is conspicuous by its absence in the Early Gupta inscriptions and coins.

Secondly, Rāmagupta, as propounded by Sircar,[39] was related to the family of Harigupta and Indragupta and ruled

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about the close of the 5th and the beginning of the 6th Century AD. This view is based on the alleged similarity of the coin types and name of Rāmagupta with those of Harigupta and Indragupta, who are known to have flourished around the end of the 5th Century AD. Sircar[40] has further suggested that Rāmagupta might have been an as yet unknown younger brother of the Later Gupta King Jīvitagupta.

Thirdly, as advanced by PL Gupta,[41] HV Trivedi,[42] AS Altekar[43] and KD Bajpai,[44] Rāmagupta, identified as the elder brother of Candragupta II and husband of Dhruvadevī, flourished in the second half of the 4th Century AD. This view is likewise based on the paleography of the coin legends described as Early Gupta.

It is therefore evident that the three theories on the identity of Rāmagupta are based mainly on the paleography of the coin legends which has been utilised and interpreted by different scholars to arrive at different conclusions about the dates of the coins. Needless to say, any dating based solely on paleography is conjectural and speculative, for the conclusions it leads to are often diverse.

The paleographists G Buhler and Rapson have assigned the Hathigumpha inscription of Khāravela to the first half of the 2nd Century BC, Sircar places the record in the second half of the 1st Century BC, all of them deriving support from paleography.

Sometimes we also see the simultaneous existence of different alphabets in the same region and time, as was the case with Orissa under the Śailodbhava kings of about the 7th-8th Centuries AD,[45] thus rendering any suggestion regarding chronology extremely difficult and improbable. But paleography, when corroborated by other evidences, leads to reliable conclusions. Where is the corroborative evidence in the case of the Rāmagupta coins?

The fact that the coins of Rāmagupta show a marked resemblance to the copper coins of the Mālavas and Nāgas which were popularised in Malwa in the pre-Gupta period will no doubt go to strengthen the view of AK Narain that Rāmagupta was a pre-Gupta local Malwa king. The close correspondence between the Rāmagupta coins and the Mālava-Nāga coinage may be shown by the chart drawn below:

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Rāmagupta coins	**Mālava-Nāga coins**
1. Coins are round.	1. Coins are roughly circular or oval.
2. Coins do not bear the bust of the king.	2. Coins do not contain any royal bust.
3. The lion-type coins show the figure of a lion with an upraised tail.	3. The lion with an upraised tail figures on several coins.
4. The obverse shows a crescent at the top.	4. The obverse of the Nāga coins shows a similar crescent.
5. The legend is written in a straight line.	5. The legend on the Mālava coins is in a straight line but that on the Nāga coins is generally circular and rarely in a straight line.

Following are points of discrepancy betrayed by the two categories of coins:

First, the posture of the lion on the coins of Rāmagupta is quite different from that represented on the Mālava coins.

Secondly, the legend on the Mālava coins is not enclosed in a circle but is written within a rectangular incuse.

Thirdly, the figure of Garuḍa appears on the majority of the Rāmagupta coins but such a device does not make its appearance on the Mālava or Nāga coins. It cannot escape notice that the Garuḍa type coins of Rāmagupta far outnumber those of the lion type.

The coins of Rāmagupta likewise betray a close correspondence to the Imperial Gupta coins, as may be demonstrated with the help of the chart that follows:

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Rāmagupta coins	Imperial Gupta coins
1. Coins show various varieties of the bird Garuḍa.	1. The silver and copper coins of the Gupta rulers from the time of Candragupta II onwards show similar varieties of Garuḍa.
2. Several coins show the figure of Garuḍa, holding snakes.	2. The coins of Candragupta II and his successors sometimes show the bird Garuḍa, holding snakes.
3. The figure of the three-headed Garuḍa occurs on certain Rāmagupta coins.	3. The figure of the three-headed Garuḍa appears on some of the silver coins of Kumāragupta I.
4. Some of the Rāmagupta coins show on their obverse inside a circle a crescent at the top and the legend below.	4. The vase-type copper coins of Candragupta II show a similar obverse.
5. Coins were struck on the basis of a weight standard, approximating 40 grains.	5. The copper coins of Candragupta II follow the same metrical system.
6. The motif of the lion occurs on some Rāmagupta coins.	6. The type of lion seen on the Rāmagupta coins occurs on a clay seal of Dhruvadevī.[46]

Problem of Identification

The coins of Rāmagupta however do not show such a striking similarity with the monetary issues of Harigupta[47] and Indragupta. The only common feature of the coins of Rāmagupta, Harigupta and Indragupta is the occurrence of the bird Garuḍa, but the various varieties of Garuḍa noticeable in the coins of Rāmagupta are absent from the coins of Harigupta and Indragupta.

The legend of the coins of Harigupta is not as short as that of the Rāmagupta coins, and it is written in two lines unlike the legend on the Rāmagupta coins which is in a straight line. Whereas the bust of the king was a favourite device of both Harigupta and Indragupta, this device did not find favour with Rāmagupta.

It is extremely difficult to associate Rāmagupta with Harigupta and Indragupta, for, no coins of Rāmagupta have so far been discovered in Bihar, Kauśāmbī or Pañcāla, nor have we come across any coins of the other two kings from eastern Malwa which has yielded a large number of copper coins of Rāmagupta, amounting to a few hundreds. Sircar's remarks

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about the close relationship between Rāmagupta and the Later Gupta monarch Jīvitagupta are negated by the fact that no coins of kings of this period[48] have so far come to light.

Of the three views on the identity of Rāmagupta, the first and the third appear more convincing and reasonable than the second. In other words, Rāmagupta was either a local Mālava or Nāga king of eastern Malwa or he was the Imperial Gupta prince of the same name, the elder brother of Candragupta II so well known from the drama *Devī-Candraguptam*.

To start with the first alternative. Where is the difficulty in accepting the theory that Rāmagupta was a local Mālava or Nāga king of eastern Malwa in the early part of the 4th Century AD? It is very doubtful whether the Mālavas held sway over eastern Malwa about this period, as their kingdom appears to have comprised Mewar, Tonk and the adjoining region of southeast Rajasthan[49] in western Malwa.

Till now not a single coin of Rāmagupta has ever come from western Malwa. The coins of the Mālavas often show the so-called Ujjain symbol, of cross and balls. A large number of coins of Rāmagupta have been unearthed but we have not as yet found a coin that bears the well-known Mālava symbol. Again, the majority of Mālava coins bear the name of the tribe, but we do not come across any such tribal name on the Rāmagupta coins.

Moreover, no Mālava ruler with a Gupta name ending is so far known. In view of these considerations, the identification of Rāmagupta of the coins with an unknown Mālava king of the same name, whose very existence has not yet been definitely proved, appears highly improbable. The Nāgas occupied parts of eastern Malwa about the first half of the 4th Century AD, but Rāmagupta could hardly have been a scion of the Nāga family for the name Rāmagupta militates against such a presumption.

Rāmagupta issued a large number of coins with the device of Garuḍa, which is sometimes shown holding snakes. To adopt such a device for his own coinage was certainly not in harmony with the religious belief and sentiment of a Nāga king.

The authenticity of the second alternative, that Rāmagupta of the copper coins was the elder brother of Candragupta II Vikramāditya, is opposed on the basis of the

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arguments enumerated below:

First, Rāmagupta, the elder brother of Candragupta II, could not have held sway over the region around Vidisha which came to form a part of the Gupta dominions at a subsequent date, in the reign of Candragupta II.[50]

Secondly, the coins of Rāmagupta do not exercise any influence on the coins of the Imperial Guptas. Candragupta II issued nine types of copper coins and it seems strange that none of these has a lion on the reverse.[51]

Thirdly, the name of Rāmagupta is given in Prākṛt on his coins. This is unusual since we do not find the names of the Gupta rulers on their coins in Prākṛt forms.[52]

Fourthly, the coins of the Guptas, in gold, silver or copper, invariably bear the bust of the monarch, but the coins of Rāmagupta offer a surprising departure from recognised convention.[53]

Fifthly, all the early Gupta emperors are known to have struck gold coins, but it is inexplicable that there should have been so far no gold coin of Rāmagupta.[54]

But the arguments levelled against the theory, equating Rāmagupta of the coins with the elder brother of Candragupta II, do not appear unanswerable. It may be observed against the first argument that the coins of Rāmagupta have been found not from Vidisha alone, they have also been discovered at Besnagar and Eran. A record of Samudragupta has been found at Eran in eastern Malwa. The discovery of a genuine record of Samudragupta is very significant when it is remembered that the places where the inscriptions of this Gupta monarch have been unearthed are far from being numerous.[55]

As inscriptions, discovered in places other than those of pilgrimage, are almost positive proofs of the limits of the kingdoms of those rulers who issued them, it may reasonably be held that Eran formed a part of the Gupta dominions even in the reign of Samudragupta.

In the Allahabad pillar inscription mention is made of a king named Gaṇapatināga whose kingdom is said to have been annexed to the dominions of Samudragupta. The kingdom of Gaṇapatināga has not been defined in the record, but the fact that his coins have been found at Besnagar would imply that a part of eastern Malwa belonged to this Nāga

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king of Padmāvatī. It was from Gaṇapatināga that the region around Besnagar was evidently conquered by Samudragupta.[56]

It cannot however be said that the whole of eastern Malwa was in the possession of Samudragupta for there are reasons to believe that about the same time some of its parts were definitely under the occupation of certain semi-independent tribal powers that paid him taxes, obeyed his orders and performed obeisance in person to him.

Of the nine tribal states enumerated in the Allahabad pillar inscription, a few can easily be located in the eastern part of Malwa. The kingdom of the Ābhīras[57] is located in the region around Ahirwada between Jhansi and Vidisha. The kingdom of the Prārjunas[58] is placed near Narsingarh, not far from Vidisha. The kingdom of the Sanakānīkas[59] is identified with the Isagarh region, and the kingdom of the Kākas[60] is equated with the region around Sanchi which was known as Kākanāda-boṭa.

These four tribal states, all located in eastern Malwa, lay within Samudragupta's sphere of influence but did not form a part of the area directly under the rule of the great Gupta monarch.

The observation that Candragupta II did not issue copper coins with the device of a lion on the reverse is correct, but it cannot escape notice that the reverse of the Cakra type copper coins of this Gupta king show the various varieties of Garuḍa, which occur so frequently on the coins of Rāmagupta.

Further, the close correspondence between the copper coins of Candragupta II and Rāmagupta in respect of the occurrence of the Garuḍa device, depiction of the crescent and legend as one above the other within a circle, metrology, etc would demolish the theory that the coins of Rāmagupta did not influence those of Candragupta II and his successors.

Thirdly, it is doubtful whether the name Rāmagupta is mentioned in its Prākṛt form[61] on the coins. The legend in most cases is blurred, and the complete legend, read from a large number of such pieces, appears to be *Rāmagupta*.

Fourthly, it is true that the Rāmagupta coins do not bear the bust of the king, but it has to be admitted that the *cakra*[62] and vase[63] type of copper coins of Candragupta II and the altar type[64] of Kumāragupta I or II do not contain the royal

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bust. The fact that the coins of Rāmagupta do not bear the royal bust was not without significance.

It seems that immediately after his conquest of Eran and Besnagar Samudragupta nominated his son Rāmagupta as governor of the conquered parts of eastern Malwa. This was done to serve the twofold purpose of keeping the turbulent semi-independent tribal chiefs of the region in check and of persuading the elder prince to leave the court of Pāṭaliputra in favour of the younger prince Candragupta II, who was to be nominated to the imperial throne.

The practice of appointing princes as governors of provinces was prevalent in the Gupta period. The instances of Govindagupta of the Mandasor inscription, dated Vikrama year 524 (AD 467) and Ghaṭotkacagupta of the Tumain fragmentary inscription of the Gupta year 116 (AD 435) are pointers to this direction.

Most of his coins were issued in the period of his governorship of eastern Malwa, and when he asserted independence at the death of his father Samudragupta, the threat from the neighbouring Śakas and the reigning Gupta monarch Candragupta II hardly gave him any respite for the introduction of a new coinage with his own portrait, as was expected of an independent monarch.

Fifthly, notwithstanding the testimony of Viśākhadatta, it does not seem likely that Rāmagupta ever ascended the throne of Pāṭaliputra. He governed a part of eastern Malwa in the reign of Samudragupta and with the death of his father ultimately rose to the rank of an independent chief of the region for a short period till he was overthrown and killed by his younger brother.

The fact that all the early coins of eastern Malwa were struck in metals other than gold would legitimately create the impression that eastern Malwa did not have a gold mint. In the circumstances, it is not at all surprising that there should have been no gold coins[65] of Rāmagupta.

If the theory ascribing the copper coins from eastern Malwa to Rāmagupta, the elder brother of Candragupta II Vikramāditya be conceded, one is inevitably led to the conclusion that the region over which Rāmagupta exercised sway even at the summit of his power was only a small fragment of

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the vast Gupta dominions, and to suppose that he was the immediate predecessor of Candragupta II on the imperial throne is to go astray wilfully from the terra firma of solid facts.

REFERENCES

1. Sten Konow, KP Jayaswal and NN Das Gupta (*IC*, IV, pp 216 ff) are of the opinion that Viśākhadatta was a contemporary of Candragupta II, but Levi places him in the post-Gupta but pre-Harṣa age. Some hold that Viśākhadatta cannot be earlier than the 9th Century AD (*EHNI*, p 200).
2. *SAAIHC*, p 3.
3. *PHAI*, p 554.
4. RK Mookerji, *The Gupta Empire*, p 66.
5. RD Banerji, *Manindra Chandra Nandi Lectures*, p 38; *JBORS*, XIV, p 227.
6. *SHAIB*, p 225.
7. *EI*, XVIII, p 248.
8. *IA*, XIII, p 249; *EI*, VII, p 36. *Sāmarthye sati ninditā pravihitā n-aiv-āgrāje krūratān| Bandhu-strī-gaman-ādibhiḥ kucaritair - āvarjjitaṁ nāyaśaḥ|| Śauc - āśaucaparāṅmukhaṁ na ca bhiyā paiśācyam-aṅgīkṛtaṁ| Tyāgen - asama-sāhasaiś - ca bhuvane yaḥ Sāhasāṅko-'bhavat||*). The expression *bandhu-strī* in the passage, when considered in the context of Sāhasāṅka's cruelty to his elder brother, has to be translated as "his brother's wife" and not as the "wives of his friends", as some scholars have done.
9. *IC*, IV, p 220.
10. *JAIH*, III, pp 148-49.
11. X, 18, 8; X, 40, 2.
12. XVIII, 3, 2.
13. XII, 73, 12; XIII, 8, 22.
14. Jolly thinks that the work of Yājñavalkya was composed around AD 600. Kane controverts the view and places it between 100 BC and AD 300. S Chattopadhyaya (*SLAI*, p 3) places the work in the early days of Gupta rule which witnessed a strong revival of the Brahmanical culture.
15. I, 67.
16. I, 222.
17. KN Chatterjee, *Hindu Marriage—Past and Present* (Varanasi, 1972), p 263.
18. XII, 52.
19. XII, 97.
20. IV, 30. The word *pati* in the first *pāda* of the verse is sometimes read as *a-patau* in the sense of *alpa-pati* or betrothed husband.
21. *JNSI*, XXVIII, pt 2, pp 157 ff.
22. Ibid, p 163.
23. *SI*, pp 411-15.
24. Ibid, pp 415-18.
25. Ibid, pp 412-13, 416.
26. Ibid, p 412.
27. Ibid, p 272.
28. *JNSI*, XXVIII, pt 2, p 158.
29. This presupposes that Pravarasena II was the same as Dāmodarasena—a presumption based on two arguments.

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First, the inscription uses the phrase *Vākāṭakānāṁ Mahārājaḥ* in connection with the name of Dāmodarasena and not with that of the reigning monarch Pravarasena II. Secondly, the absence of the name of Divākarasena from the list of Prabhāvatī's sons, as found in the inscription, would imply that Dāmodarasena and Pravarasena II were identical and that the latter name was assumed by the prince at the time of his accession. Even if the separate identity of the two be accepted, that would in no way militate against our observation as the difference between them in age was not more than five years.

30. Expressions like *jīva-sutā* or *jīva-putrā* occur in the Rgveda (X, 36, 9), Mahābhārata (V, 144,2), Rāmāyaṇa (IV, 19, 11) as well as in some old inscriptions (*EI*, VIII, p 73).
31. AS Altekar, *The Coinage of the Gupta Empire*, pp 44-5.
32. *JNSI*, XII, pp 103-11.
33. Ibid, XIII, pp 128-30.
34. *INS*, p 126.
35. Ibid, p 120.
36. Ibid, p 121.
37. Three Jaina image inscriptions, recording the making of images, two of the eighth Tīrthaṅkara Candraprabha and one of the ninth Tīrthaṅkara Puṣpadanta (Suvidhināṭha) by Mahārāj-ādhirāja Rāmagupta at the behest of the mendicant Cella Kṣamaṇa, have been discovered at Vidisha (*JOIB*, XVIII, pp247 ff; *JAIH*, III, p 146). GS Gai (*JOIB*, XVIII, p 248), who has edited the inscriptions of Rāmagupta, points out that the alphabet of the record clearly resembles that of the Eran inscription of Samudragupta and the Sanchi inscription of Candragupta II of the Gupta year 93, and thus from the paleographical point of view the records may be assigned to about the 4th Century AD. A study of the sculptural features and styles of these images has also led him to arrive at the same conclusion. GS Gai observes, "The *prabhāvalī* is not so much developed and stylised as in the case of the Buddha images at Sanchi of about the 5th Century AD. The representation of *cakra* in the centre of the pedestals of all the three images instead of the characteristic *lāñchanas* of the respective Tīrthaṅkaras also indicates an early stage in the development of Jain iconography" (ibid, p 248). RC Agrawala (ibid, p 253) believes that these images may be placed stylistically between the Kuṣāṇa and Gupta art but are datable somewhere towards the end of the 4th Century AD. A comparison of certain letters and signs, as found in the Vidisha inscriptions, with those in the Sanchi inscription of Candragupta II, has however led DC Sircar (*JAIH*, III, p 149) to assign the records of Rāmagupta to a later period.
38. *JNSI*, XII, p 111.
39. *SIC*, pp 221 ff.
40. *JAIH*, III, pp 147-48.
41. *JNSI*, XII, pp 103-11.
42. Ibid, pp 128-30.
43. *CGE*, pp 162-64.

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44. *INS*, p 129.
45. DK Ganguly, *Historical Geography and Dynastic History of Orissa* (Calcutta, 1977), pp 178 ff.
46. *ASI*, AR, 1903-04, plate XL.
47. Till now only two copper coins of Harigupta have been found. One was found at Ahicchatrā (modern Ramnagar in Bareilly district, Uttar Pradesh) (Cunningham, *Coins of Medieval India*, p 10, plate II, No 6) while the location of the other, now preserved in Allahabad Municipal Museum, is unknown (*SIC*, p 224). Excavations at Kumrahar, near Patna in Bihar, have revealed two copper coins of Indragupta (Altekar and Mishra, *Report on Kumrahar Excavations* (1951-53), p 100, Nos 1 and 3). There is no valid ground for believing that these two rulers flourished in the Bundelkhand-Malwa region.
48. Mention may be made of a coin having on its reverse the name of *Mahārāja* Devagupta, published by Cunningham. But it is not clear whether this coin really belongs to Devagupta. As Sircar (*SIC*, p 229) himself admits, Harigupta might have been wrongly mentioned as Devagupta.
49. *EHNI*, p 192.
50. *JNSI*, XII, p 110.
51. Ibid, p. 109.
52. Ibid, p 110.
53. *SAAIHC*, p 16.
54. Ibid, p 10.
55. The recorded locations of Samudragupta's inscriptions include Allahabad and Eran whereas his records, discovered in Nalanda and Gaya, are said to be spurious.
56. Sircar's (*SIC*, p 223) assertion that Samudragupta's supremacy over Malwa is also indicated by Harişeṇa's statement about the extirpation of an Āryāvarta king named Rudradeva, identified with the Śaka ruler Rudrasena III of Western India, does not bear scrutiny.
57. *JRAS* (1897), p 891.
58. *IHQ*, I, p 258.
59. *SI*, pp 271-72.
60. Ibid, p 273.
61. Altekar (*CGE*, p 162) reads the legend as *Rāmaɡupta* (ibid, plate XXVI, no 28), a reading confirmed by KD Bajpai (*INS*, pp 140-42).
62. *CGE*, p 160.
63. Ibid, p 161.
64. Ibid, p 239.
65. Altekar (*CGE*, p 164) thinks that the gold coins of Rāmagupta may be discovered in future and cites the case of Budhagupta, two of whose gold coins have so far been known. Altekar has further suggested that Rāmagupta was in possession of all the Gupta dominions after the death of Samudragupta, but excluding the testimony of Devī-Candraguptam there is no evidence in favour of the existence of such an extensive kingdom under Rāmagupta. In fact, it is difficult to believe that Rāmagupta's kingdom extended beyond eastern Malwa, and accordingly he does not appear to have struck gold coins at all.

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THE AŚVAMEDHA COINS OF SAMUDRAGUPTA

The well-known *aśvamedha* type[1] of coins of the Gupta Emperor Samudragupta bear on the obverse a horse standing before a sacrificial post (*yūpa*), enclosed within a platform and the legend *Rāj-ādhirājaḥ pṛthivīm-avitvā* (*or vijitya*) *divaṁ jayaty-āhṛta-Vājimedhaḥ*, "the king of kings, who had performed the *Vājimedha* sacrifice, wins heaven after protecting (or conquering) the earth." The reverse of these pieces shows the crowned queen (Dattadevī) standing on a circular pearl-bordered mat and holding a *chourī* and a towel in her right and left hands respectively, and the legend *Aśvamedha-parākramaḥ*, "one powerful enough to perform the *Aśvamedha* sacrifice."

Problem of Attribution

Although the majority of scholars are inclined to attribute these coins to the illustrious Gupta Emperor Samudragupta, some numismatists still appear to be lukewarm to subscribe to this view. MK Dhavalikar,[2] for instance, asserts that the so-called *Aśvamedha* coins were struck by Candragupta II Vikramāditya in memory of his father Samudragupta, on the basis of the following threefold argument:

First, whereas the name of Samudragupta is absent from the legend on these coins, his name is invariably mentioned on all the other types of his coins. "It is therefore rather strange that the *aśvamedha* type, the best specimen among the emperor's coin types, commemorating the most important and glorious event of the reign, should not bear his name. This can by no means be ascribed either to the negligence of his mint masters or to reluctance on the part of the emperor."[3]

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Secondly, the *aśvamedha* type is completely Indian and has no foreign inspiration unlike the other known types of Samudragupta where alien influence is preponderant. The mint masters of Samudragupta, who were "accustomed to copy slavishly even the meaningless monograms from the Kuṣāṇa prototype", were incapable of striking a purely Indian coin with no Kuṣāṇa influence whatever.[4]

Thirdly, instances are not altogether lacking to demonstrate that successors issued coins and medals in memory of their predecessors. Samudragupta issued the Candragupta-Kumāradevī type of medals in commemoration of his father Candragupta I. "Samudragupta's successor Candragupta II did the same by issuing the *aśvamedha* type."[5]

An attempt may now be made to evaluate the authenticity of these arguments advanced by MK Dhavalikar. While it has to be conceded that the name of Samudragupta does not find any direct mention either on the obverse or the reverse of these coins, there is hardly any doubt that the name of the issuer of these coins is alluded to in the legend *Aśvamedha-parākramaḥ*, appearing on the reverse of such pieces.

Line 17 of the Allahabad inscription[6] shows that *Parākramaḥ* was the characteristic title (*Parākram-āṅkasya*) of Samudragupta. No other Gupta emperor is known to have borne this title. The legend *Aśvamedha-parākramaḥ* would accordingly disclose that Samudragupta had issued these coins. It cannot escape notice that Samudragupta used the *biruda parākramaḥ* (*Vyāghra-parākramaḥ*), instead of his own personal name on both the obverse and reverse of variety A of his tiger-slayer coins.[7]

The second argument of Dhavalikar is likewise untenable. Some coin types of Samudragupta, especially the standard type, show without doubt an imitation of the Kuṣāṇa prototype, but it is not correct to hold that all the known types of the said Gupta monarch are close copies of Kuṣāṇa originals. The tiger-slayer type, which are artistically very beautiful, do not betray any foreign influence. Altekar[8] rightly observes: "The type shows no foreign influence whatsoever; the coat and trousers are replaced by their Indian counterparts; the enthroned goddess on the reverse gives place to the Gaṅgā, whose figure is slender and graceful."

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Attention may further be drawn to Samudragupta's lyrist type[9] which, barring the presence of the cornucopia in the hand of the goddess on the reverse, shows no trace of Kuṣāṇa influence. The capability of the mint masters of Samudragupta to produce a purely Indian type cannot in the circumstances be questioned.

Thirdly, the view that the Candragupta-Kumāradevī type of coins were struck by Samudragupta in commemoration of his parents is controversial.[10] The practice of issuing coins and medals in memory of predecessors was generally popular with foreign rulers but was far from appreciated by Indian kings. Further, foreign kings like Agathocles, Antimachos, Theos and Eucratides, who are known to have issued commemorative medals, have all given their own names on the reverse of such pieces. Candragupta II would have obviously done the same if the *aśvamedha* coins were in reality struck by him in memory of his father Samudragupta.

Horse Sacrifices Performed by Samudragupta

S Chattopadhyaya[11] has propounded, on the basis of the following twofold argument, that Samudragupta performed more than one *aśvamedha* sacrifice:

The obverse of the *aśvamedha* type of coins shows two different types of legends: (i) *Rāj-ādhirājaḥ pṛthivīm-avitvā divaṁ jayaty-aprativārya-viryaḥ* [quoted as *Rāj-ādhirājaḥ pṛthivīṁ avitvā divaṁ jayaty-aprativārya-vīrya*] and (ii) *Rāj-ādhirājaḥ pṛthivīṁ vijitya divaṁ jayaty-āhṛta-Vājimedhaḥ* [quoted as *Pṛthivīṁ vijitya divaṁ jayaty-āhṛta-Vājimedhaḥ*]. The *aśvamedha* coins were then of two distinct types issued on two different occasions.

Samudragupta is given the epithet *Anek-āśvamedha-jājin* in the Poona plates of the Vākāṭaka Queen Prabhāvatīguptā.

Neither of these arguments appears convincing. The surmise that the obverse of the *aśvamedha* type of coins of Samudragupta contains two different legends is indeed gratuitous. Long ago, John Allan[12] read the legend on the obverse of these coins as *Rāj-ādhirājaḥ pṛthivīm-avitvā divaṁ jayaty-aprativārya-vīryaḥ*. Whereas there is hardly any difficulty in accepting the reading of the early part of the legend, *Rāj-ādhirājaḥ*

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pṛthivīṃ-avitvā divaṁ as correct, the validity of the latter portion, as proposed by Allan, is not beyond dispute.

This is because the letters of this part are not distinct on any specimen Allan noticed. In the circumstances, Allan's reading of the legend, as appearing on the obverse of Samudragupta's *aśvamedha* type of coins, cannot be considered conclusive. In 1914 a new coin was discovered on which Venis[13] succeeded in detecting the traces of the letters *ta*, *va*, *ja*, *ma* and *dha* at the end of the legend, and he has accordingly read the legend as *Rāj-ādhirājaḥ pṛthivīm-avitvā divaṁ jayaty-āhṛta-Vājimedhaḥ*.

The discovery of several specimens of the *aśvamedha* type of coins of Samudragupta in the Bayana hoard in 1946 has confirmed the reliability of the reading of Venis and shows the absurdity of Allan's. "Several specimens are now discovered in the Bayana hoard", writes Altekar,[14] "where the concluding word *vājimedhaḥ* is absolutely clear. We must therefore hold that the legend ends with *divaṁ jayatyāhṛitavājimedhaḥ*." On some coins of this type we however come across the term *vijitya* in place of *avitvā*.[15] Classification of the legend appearing on the *aśvamedha* type of coins into two distinct groups, as proposed by S Chattopadhyaya, is therefore not in agreement with the proper interpretation of source materials at our disposal.

Secondly, there is no gainsaying that the Poona copper plate inscription of the Vākāṭaka Queen Prabhāvatīguptā speaks of Samudragupta as having performed many *aśvamedha* sacrifices, but the account of the Gupta dynasty that one comes across in this record is far from trustworthy. Candragupta I, who is described as a *Mahārājādhirāja* in all the inscriptional records of the Imperial Guptas, has been erroneously bracketed in this epigraph as the bearer of the less pretentious title *Mahārāja*, along with his less illustrious father Ghaṭotkaca[16] (*Mahārāja-śrī-Ghaṭotkacas-tasya sat-putro mahārāja-śrī-Candraguptasya*).

The same epigraph has further distorted facts when it applies to Candragupta II such epithets as *Pṛthivyām-aprati-rathaḥ*, *Sarva-rāj-occhettā*, *Catur-udadhi-salil-āsvāditayaśa* and *Aneka-go-biraṇya-koṭi-sahasra-prada*, which, to conclude from the combined evidence[17] of the Bilsad stone pillar inscription of Kumāragupta and the Bhitari stone pillar inscription of

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Skandagupta, were the usual attributes of Samudragupta.

This would indubitably point to the fact that the composers of the Vākāṭaka charters were either ill-informed or careless in recording information about the Imperial Guptas. It is hardly credible to suggest solely on the evidence of the Poona inscription that Samudragupta performed a number of *aśvamedha* sacrifices.

The very absence of even the slightest reference to *aśvamedha* sacrifice in the Allahabad record, a storehouse of information on the reign of Samudragupta, quite convincingly indicates that horse sacrifice was celebrated by the Gupta emperor sometime after the incision of the record but shortly before the termination of his reign. Paucity of time hardly allowed him to repeat the act twice.

Samudragupta's Motive Behind the Aśvamedha

Altekar[18] echoes the generally accepted view when he asserts that Samudragupta performed the *aśvamedha* sacrifice to celebrate his memorable victories in North and South India. But there is a great deal of probability in postulating that the cause of Samudragupta's observance of the horse sacrifice was entirely different.

The *Āśvamedhikaparvan* lays down that a Kṣatriya can free himself from impious acts through the performance of the horse sacrifice. Vyāsa is said to have advised Yudhiṣṭhira to prepare for *aśvamedha* when the latter desired to get rid of the sins he had perpetrated by taking human lives on the battle-field of Kurukṣetra[19] (*Aśvamedho hi rājendra pāvanaḥ sarvapāpmānām/ ten-eṣṭvā tvaṁ vipāpmā vai bhavitā n-ātra saṁśayaḥ//*). The *Śāntiparvan*[20] speaks of an *aśvamedha* sacrifice being held by King Janamejaya with a view to removing his sins (*Evamuktvā tu rājānam-Indroto Janamejayam/ yājayāmāsa vidhivad Vājimedhena Śaunakaḥ//*).

Indra is likewise known to have purified himself through the performance of *aśvamedha* after he had sinned by killing the Brāhmaṇa Vṛtra[21] (*Tatr-Āśvamedhaḥ su-mahān Mahendrasya mahātmanaḥ/ vabṛte pāvanārthaṁ vai brahma-haty-āpaho nṛpa//*). There is no serious difficulty in accepting the testimony of the Mahābhārata as a Sastric injunction in favour of

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the observance of *aśvamedha* by royal personages as an expiatory rite for the atonement of sin.

Samudragupta, in the course of his career as a conqueror both before and after his accession to the throne, must have waged a series of battles that led to the destruction of innumerable invaluable lives, including those of his kinsmen. But the Gupta emperor was an avowed devotee of Viṣṇu and an excellent champion of peace as well.

The memory of the dreadful sights of the battlefield and the woes of the wounded and the dying might have aroused repentance in the heart of the Vaiṣṇava emperor at the end of his life. His were the days when the Mahābhārata was finally recast. The examples of Yudhiṣṭhira, Janamejaya and Indra, as highlighted in the Mahābhārata, could hardly have escaped the notice of the learned emperor. It is not improbable that Samudragupta performed *aśvamedha* in the spirit of an expiatory rite to be freed from sins that must have jeopardised the tranquillity of his sensitive mind.

The Horse

We may now take up the principal symbols appearing on the *aśvamedha* coins of Samudragupta and see what light they throw upon the nature of the sacrifice. As pointed out earlier, the horse, uncaparisoned, is shown on the obverse standing before a sacrificial post.

The horse is the principal victim in *aśvamedha*, being offered for the appeasement of the god Prajāpati the presiding deity of the sacrifice. A sacrifice, for fulfilment of its function, needs the service of intermediaries to provide the connecting link of communication between the sacred and the profane.

One such intermediary is the priest. Another intermediary of equal, if not greater, importance is the victim. If the sacrificer applied himself to the rite to the very end he would find death, not life. The victim takes his place and serves as an appropriate substitute for the human sacrificer.

As Hubert and Mauss[22] have observed, "It (the victim) alone penetrates into the perilous domain of sacrifice, it dies there, and indeed it is there in order to die. The sacrificer remains protected: the gods take the victim instead of him. The

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victim redeems him."

That the victim represents the sacrificer himself, or rather his divine self awaiting him in the other world, is clearly implied by the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*[23] wherein the *Yajamāna* and the sacrificial horse are treated as identical (*Yajamāno vā aśvaḥ*). The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[24] says the horse is sacred to Prajāpati whereas the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*[25] extols the animal as the very embodiment of the god of creatures (*Prajāpate rūpam-aśvaḥ*).

This would create the impression that the victim is sometimes a substitute for the divinity to be appeased, and by sacrificing the animal the god himself is offered up anew in the sacrifice with the belief that the dismemberment of the god is also in itself the renewal of all "cosmic life and matter."

The reason the horse is sacrificed in *aśvamedha* for the appeasement of the god Prajāpati is not far to seek. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* extols the superiority of the horse in the world of animals in unequivocal terms. Thus the horse is described as the "most vigorous of all animals",[26] the "most powerful of the animals",[27] the "swiftest of the animals"[28] and the "most famous of the animals",[29] and accordingly the horse is, of all animals, the one most acceptable (*anurūpatamaḥ*) to Prajāpati.

Secondly, the horse has a special relation to Prajāpati, for according to the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[30] the horse was produced out of the left eye of Prajāpati which swelled (*aśvayat*) and fell out. In recounting a different story of the origin of the animal the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[31] elsewhere represents the horse as having originated directly from the egg Prajāpati produced.

But not all horses are considered suitable for *aśvamedha*. A white coloured horse with dark circular spots, or a white horse with a dark frontal part, or one with a tuft of dark blue hair was usually selected for the sacrifice.[32] The reason why this combination of colours is prescribed is not explained.

But even in some countries outside India importance was attached to the colour of the victim. In Greece, for example, the victims sacrificed to the heavenly gods were usually light in colour while those offered to the Cathonian gods were

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invariably black.[33] The horse selected was a male, and this is easily conceivable, for apart from its involvement in religious copulation with the crowned queen on the second *sutyā* day it is to serve as the symbol of Prajāpati.

On the day of the actual commencement of the sacrifice which coincides with either the eighth or ninth day of the bright half of Jyaiṣṭha or Āṣāḍha or Phālguna or with the full-moon day of Caitra,[34] the horse is brought to the Fire Hall. Although the victim has a claim to an element of sacredness through its holy birth, a series of rites like fastening the horse by means of a rope of *darbha* grass, sprinkling the animal with water and the like are performed to raise the victim to the required level of sanctity.[35]

The horse is unloosed to roam for a year accompanied by 400 guards, but before this is done a rite involving the killing of a four-eyed dog and floating its corpse beneath the horse in water is observed to ensure the safe return of the horse and smooth completion of the sacrifice.

With the return of the horse to the sacrificial ground at the end of the year follow three *soma* pressing *sutyā* days, on the second of which the horse is escorted to the ground after its bath in a lake or a reservoir. The horse is then bound to a *yūpa* (stake), and is sprinkled with water by the *Adhvaryu* priest. Addresses are made to the victim, applauding its qualities and exhorting it to keep calm. As lord of the animals, the god Prajāpati is invoked to grant permission for the use of his property as a victim. In these "precautions, propitiations and marks of honour" are discernible a twofold attempt at recognising the sacred character of the victim, and persuading it to resign itself to be sacrificed peaceably.

The crowned queen, along with the favourite and discarded ones, anoints the horse with clarified butter and decorates its head, mane and tail with golden beads. In these adornments one can see an attempt at imparting a religious character to the victim. A cloth, an upper cloth and gold are spread on the ground for the horse to lie upon. It is first quietened and subsequently killed.[36] The blood and flesh of the horse are next cooked and offered to different deities, beginning with Agni and ending with Prajāpati.[37]

The sacrifice is continued on the third *sutyā* day when with

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the performance of the final purificatory bath by the *Yajamāna* king the ceremony is brought to its close, leading to the descent of the *Yajamāna* from the world of gods into the profane. Cows in thousands are offered as presents to the four principal priests, the *Adhvaryu*, *Udgātṛ*, *Hotṛ* and *Brahman*, and their assistants in accordance with the importance of the recipients, on each *sutyā* day.

The Queen

The queen, depicted on the reverse as standing to the left and holding a *chourī* in her right hand and a towel in her left, is the crowned queen of Samudragupta, Dattadevī.

The crowned queen plays a significant role in the *aśvamedha* ceremony, particularly on the second *sutyā* day. She is to anoint the frontal part of the horse with clarified butter, besides decorating the animal's head with 101 golden beads. When the horse is killed, she, along with the favourite and discarded queens, goes round the dead horse three times from right and left.

She fans the dead horse with her garments for some time, whereupon she lies down by its side to unite with it under the cover of a mantle placed by the *Adhvaryu* priest. While lying beside the horse, she with her young female attendants enters into an abusive dialogue with the *Hotṛ* priest and is afterwards raised from the ground by the attendant princesses.

The queen's sexual intercourse with the sacrificial horse may sound strange but it can easily be explained in the light of the nature and purport of *aśvamedha*. The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and other texts contain numerous references which tend to suggest that one of the chief motives behind the observance of the horse sacrifice is the urge to promote the fertility of vegetation and the animal world. Some relevant passages, particularly those occurring in the *Śatapatha Brahmaṇa*, highlighting the merit of the horse sacrifice, are worth considering in this context:

(i) "Agni Vaiśvānara will favour (the *Yajamāna*) with the multiplicity of offspring and cattle."[38]

(ii) "The priest by making offerings provides the people with food."[39]

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(iii) "There the fruit-bearing plants indeed ripen where they perform this sacrifice."[40]

(iv) "By means of oblations, offered in a proper way, the *Yajamāna* wins cattle."[41]

(v) "Verily, this is the sacrifice called Plenteous; wherever they worship with this sacrifice, everything indeed becomes plentiful."[42]

(vi) "Verily, this is the sacrifice, called food abounding; wherever they worship with this sacrifice, everything indeed becomes abounding in food."[43]

(vii) "Verily, this is the sacrifice called sapful; wherever they worship with this sacrifice, everything indeed becomes rich in sap (or drink)."[44]

(viii) "Whosoever should desire to become great, and more numerous, let him offer up those two *mahiman* cups of *soma* at the *aśvamedha* and he indeed becomes great and more numerous."[45]

The multiplicity of the animal and plant world as a goal behind the performance of *aśvamedha* is further implied by the offering of oblation to Puṣan, the cattle, Tvaṣṭṛ, the fashioner of couples, and Parjanya, the rain god, at the time of sacrifice.

There is another reason which would imply that *aśvamedha* sacrifice aimed at procreating life. It cannot escape notice that the sacrificial horse is sometimes represented in sacred texts as the embodiment of Prajāpati.[46] This shows that at *aśvamedha* the god Prajāpati himself is offered and sacrificed to ensure renewal of the universe.

The custom of sacrificing a god is based on the belief in the origin of the visible and invisible universe from the dismemberment of the supreme spirit, as embodied in the *Puruṣasukta* of the Ṛgveda, wherein the primordial being, *Puruṣa*, is represented as offering up his own self at that archetypal sacrifice, and yielding to the creation of the universe out of his separated limbs and faculties.

It is therefore natural to presume that *aśvamedha* is aimed at regenerating the animal and vegetation world[47] and thus, in spirit and practice, it partakes of the nature of a fertility rite which is primarily directed to the conservation and pro-

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motion of life. Belief in homeopathic or imitative magic or in the principle that 'like produces like' was so deeply rooted in our "rude forefathers" that ritual copulation was consciously employed as a means of promoting the fertility of the earth, vegetation, animal and the like. As James George Frazer[48] has shown, "some rites which are still, or were till lately, kept up in Europe (and in other parts of the world) can be reasonably explained only as stunted relics of a similar practice."

Ritual copulation between the queen and lord of creatures, represented by the sacrificial horse, as observed at *aśvamedha*, stands as a parallel to the sacred marriage of the god Ammon to the queen of Egypt or to the divine union of the god of wine, Dionysus, and the queen of Athens, or to the custom of marrying Frey, the god of fertility, to his human wife in Sweden, all aiming at ensuring a plenteous harvest.

The characterisation of *aśvamedha* as containing elements of a fertility rite is not incompatible with our earlier description of the sacrifice as an expiatory rite, for in Samudragupta's endeavour to promote the growth of vegetation and the animal world by celebrating *aśvamedha* one can reasonably discern an effort of the Gupta emperor to atone for the sin committed by waging wars that led to the destruction of crops and animals, including human beings.

The expiatory character of *aśvamedha* is revealed by what the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[49] says: "The *aśvamedha* is the atonement for everything, the remedy for everything. Thereby the gods redeem all sin, yea, even the slaying of a Brāhmaṇa they thereby redeem and he who performs the *aśvamedha* redeems all sin, he redeems the slaying of a Brāhmaṇa."

Antiquity of the Horse Sacrifice

Before we conclude, a few words about the antiquity of the horse sacrifice may not be considered irrelevant. Although *aśvamedha* finds mention in two hymns of the Ṛgveda, there is every likelihood that they are interpolations of much later days. The *Aitareya*, one of the earliest of the *Brāhmaṇas*, as well as the *Kauṣītakī Brāhmaṇa*, the other recension of the *Brāhmaṇa* of the Ṛgvedic priests, pass over the sacrifice in silence, thus

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creating the impression that the horse sacrifice was not a recognised institution at the time of the earliest phase of Vedic religion.

It may however be argued that the absence of earlier positive evidence is seldom sure proof of the later origin of the sacrifice, for animal sacrifices, generally speaking, do not find mention in the Ṛgveda, although they were commonly practised from remote antiquity.

It is worth remembering in this connection that *aśvamedha* involved "an assertion of power and a display of political authority such as a monarch of undisputed supremacy could have ventured upon", and accordingly its celebration in the form formulated in the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* and the *Kātyāyana Śrauta Sūtra* could hardly be held before the emergence of territorial states in India roughly around the 8th Century BC.

The chieftains of the preceding tribal-pastoral days, who were mainly engaged in cattle lifting and involved in sporadic raids, were incapable of projecting themselves as universal sovereigns, as envisaged in the observance of the horse sacrifice.

Aśvamedha was not only later in origin but also seems to have been rare in incidence. Unlike the *rājasūya*, to which even a petty ruler was fairly entitled, *aśvamedha* involved an exhibition of political authority such as only a paramount monarch could have dreamt of. "Verily, poured away (dislodged) is he", says the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*,[50] "who, being weak, performs *aśvamedha*."

The same sentiment is echoed in the *Āpastamba Śrauta Sūtra*[51] when it says: "A king ruling the whole land (*Sārvabhauma*) may perform *aśvamedha*." Its exceptional character proved a serious threat to the spread and survival of the ritual, and when the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*,[52] in conjunction with the *Taittirīya Brāhmaṇa*,[53] speaks of the sacrifice as having gone out of vogue (*utsanna*), it merely refers to the rare incidence of the sacrifice.

Among the kings of historical days credited with the performance of *aśvamedha* mention may be made of Puṣyamitra Śuṅga (c 187-151 BC), Śātakarṇi I Śātavāhana (second half of the 1st Century BC), Pārāśarīputra Sarvatāta (second half of the 1st Century BC), Vāsiṣṭhīputra Śrī Cāṁtamūla Ikṣvāku (second quarter of the 3rd Century AD), Devavarman Sālaṅkāyana

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(second quarter of the 4th Century AD), Pravarasena I Vākāṭaka (early 4th Century AD), the Nāga kings of the house of Bhāraśiva (the 3rd and 4th Centuries AD), Śivaskandavarman Pallava (first quarter of the 4th Century AD), Kumāragupta I (c AD 415-455), Pulakeśin II Cālukya (c AD 610-11 to 642) and Nandivarman Pallavamalla (c AD 730-800).

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18. *CGE*, 61-62.
19. *Āśvamedhikaparvan* 90, 7.
20. 148, 38.
21. *Udyogaparvan* 13, 18.
22. Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss, *The Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function* (London, 1965), p 98.
23. XI, 1, 8, 6; XI, 2, 2, 6.
24. XIII, 3, 1, 1.
25. III, 9, 14, 4.
26. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII, 1, 2, 5.
27. Ibid, XIII, 1, 2, 6.
28. Ibid. XIII, 1, 2, 7.
29. Ibid, XIII, 1, 2, 8.
30. XIII, 3, 1, 1.
31. VI, 1, 1, 11.
32. PV Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstra*, Vol 2, Part 2, p 1230. The observation of Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss (*op cit*, p 123) that the horse of *aśvamedha* had to be red is hardly compatible with the textual evidence.
33. *The Sacrifice: Its Nature and Function* (London, 1965), p 123.
34. PV Kane, *op cit*, p 1230.
35. Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss (*op cit*, pp 28-45) have analysed the operations in the course of which the victim was progressively made divine.
36. In the view of an orthodox Hindu the slaughter of the victim is a religious necessity. Death releases the spirit from the body and the profane world.
37. Besides the horse, a large number of animals, both domesticated and wild (including boars), were slaughtered on the three *sutyā* days.

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38. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, XIII, 1, 2, 3.
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40. Ibid, XIII, 1, 9, 10.
41. Ibid, XIII, 1, 3, 8.
42. Ibid, XIII, 3, 7, 2.
43. Ibid, XIII, 3, 7, 6.
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45. Ibid, XIII, 2, 11, 1.
46. In the Rgveda (I, 163, 3) the horse is identified with Āditya and Yama.
47. The *Bālakāṇḍa* of the Rāmāyaṇa (Chapters XIII-XIV) tells us how Daśaratha performed *aśvamedha* to beget sons.
48. *The Golden Bough* (Hong Kong, 1976), Part I, Vol II, p 98. Sometimes, as opposed to the indulgence of passions as a means of fertilising the earth, continence was also practised with a view to making crops grow (James George Frazer, *op cit*, pp 104 ff).
49. XIII, 3, 1, 1.
50. III, 8, 9, 4.
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52. XIII, 3, 3, 6.
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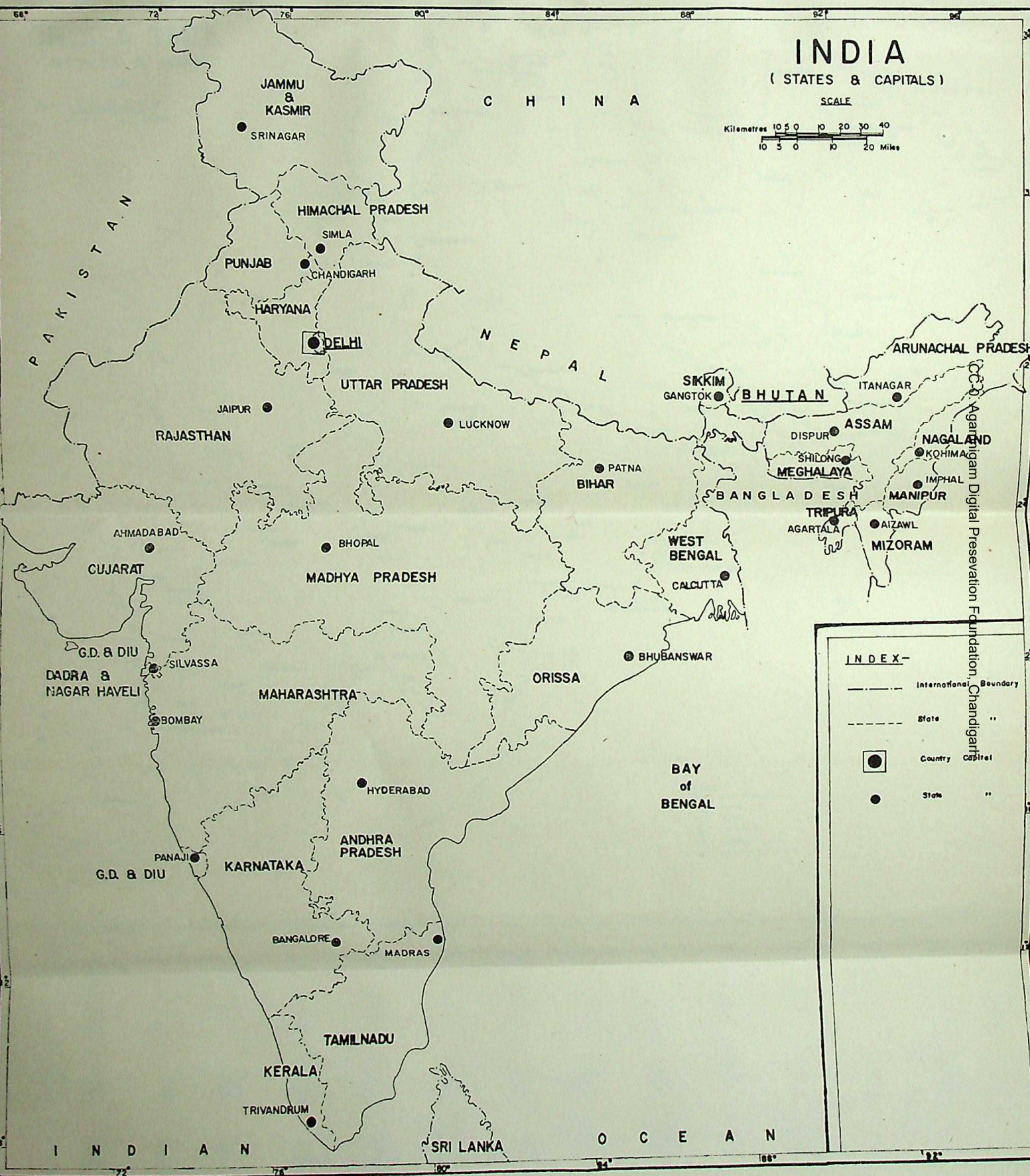
I Map of India (States & Capitals)



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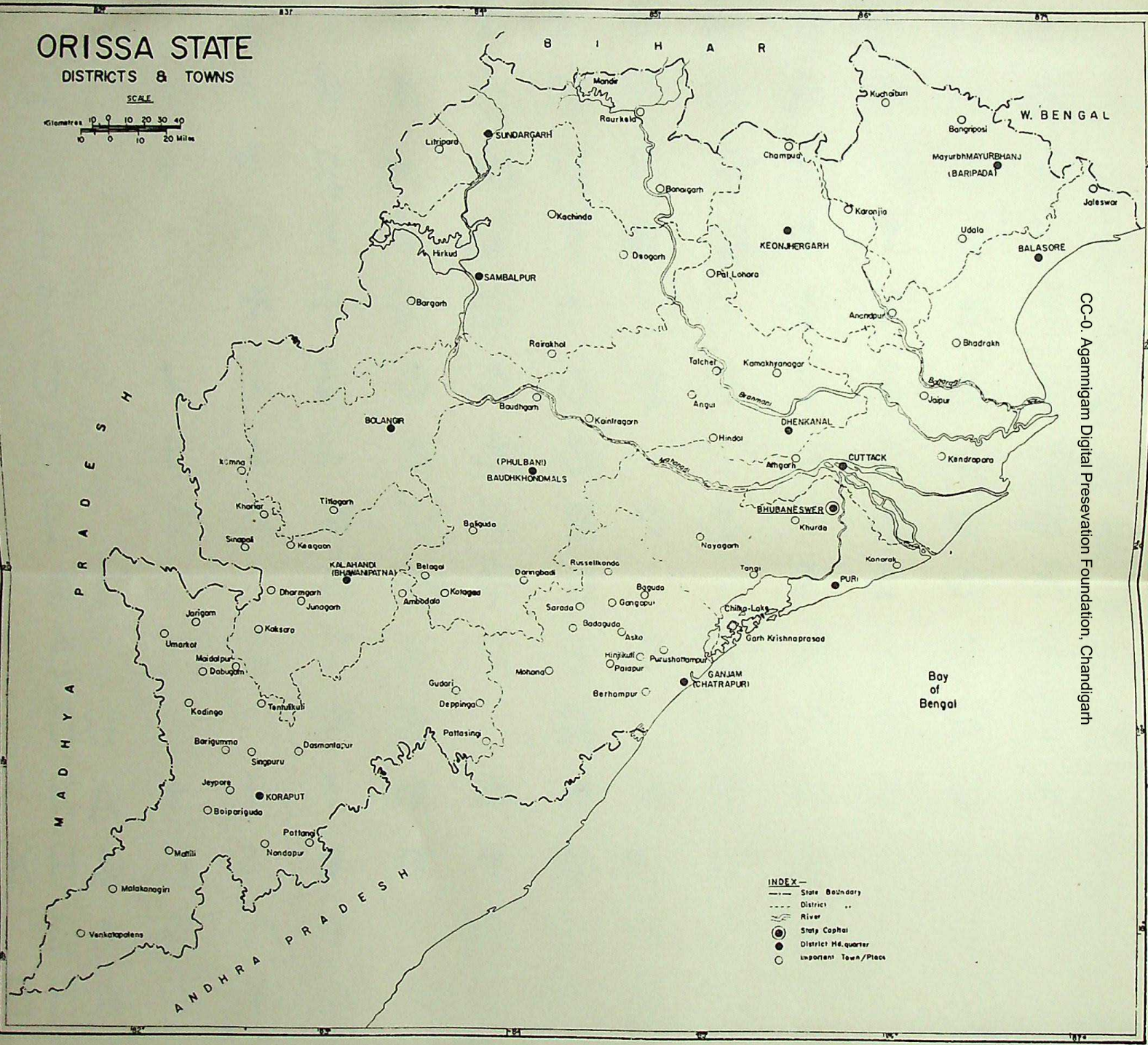
II Map of Orissa State (Districts & Towns)



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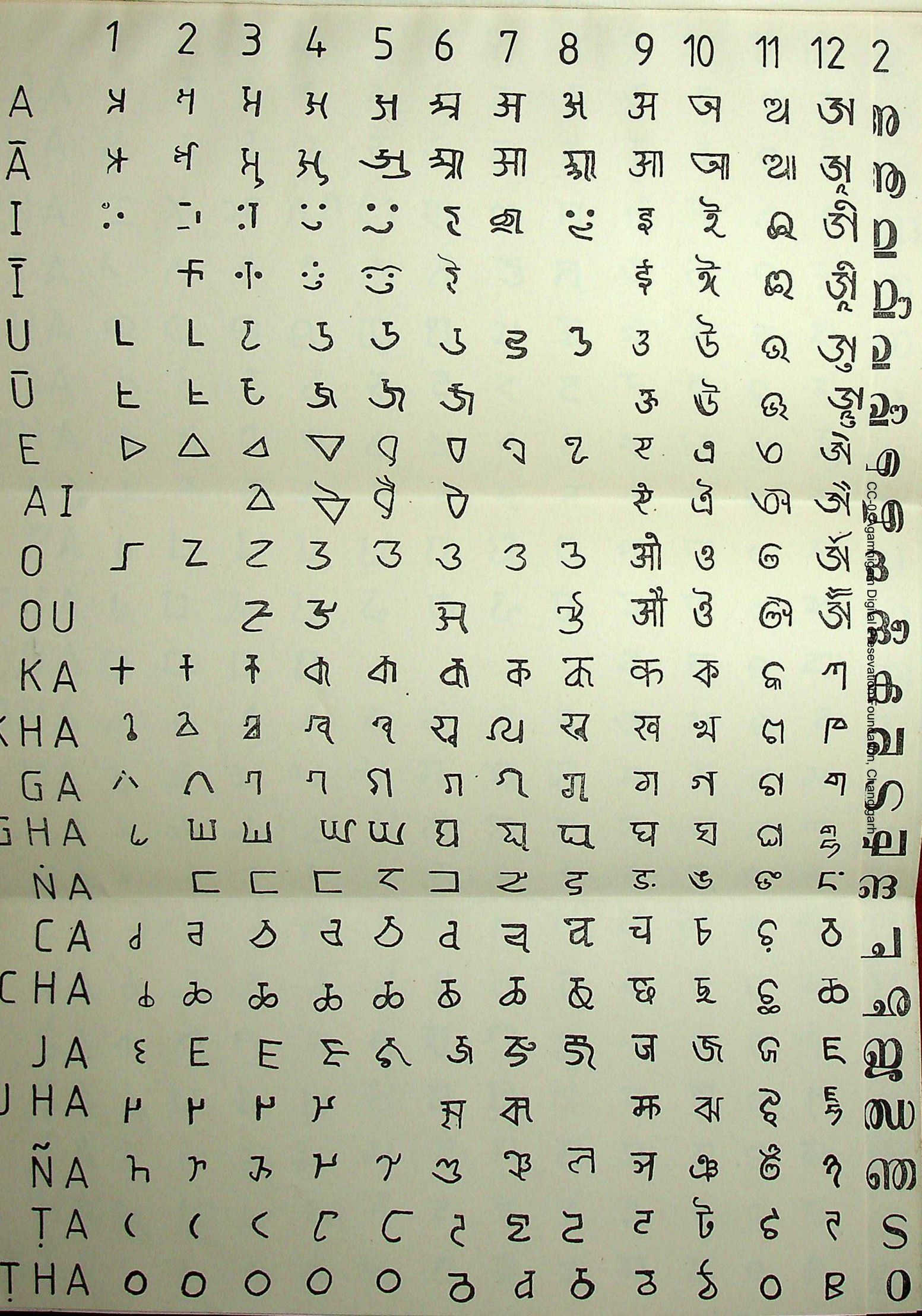

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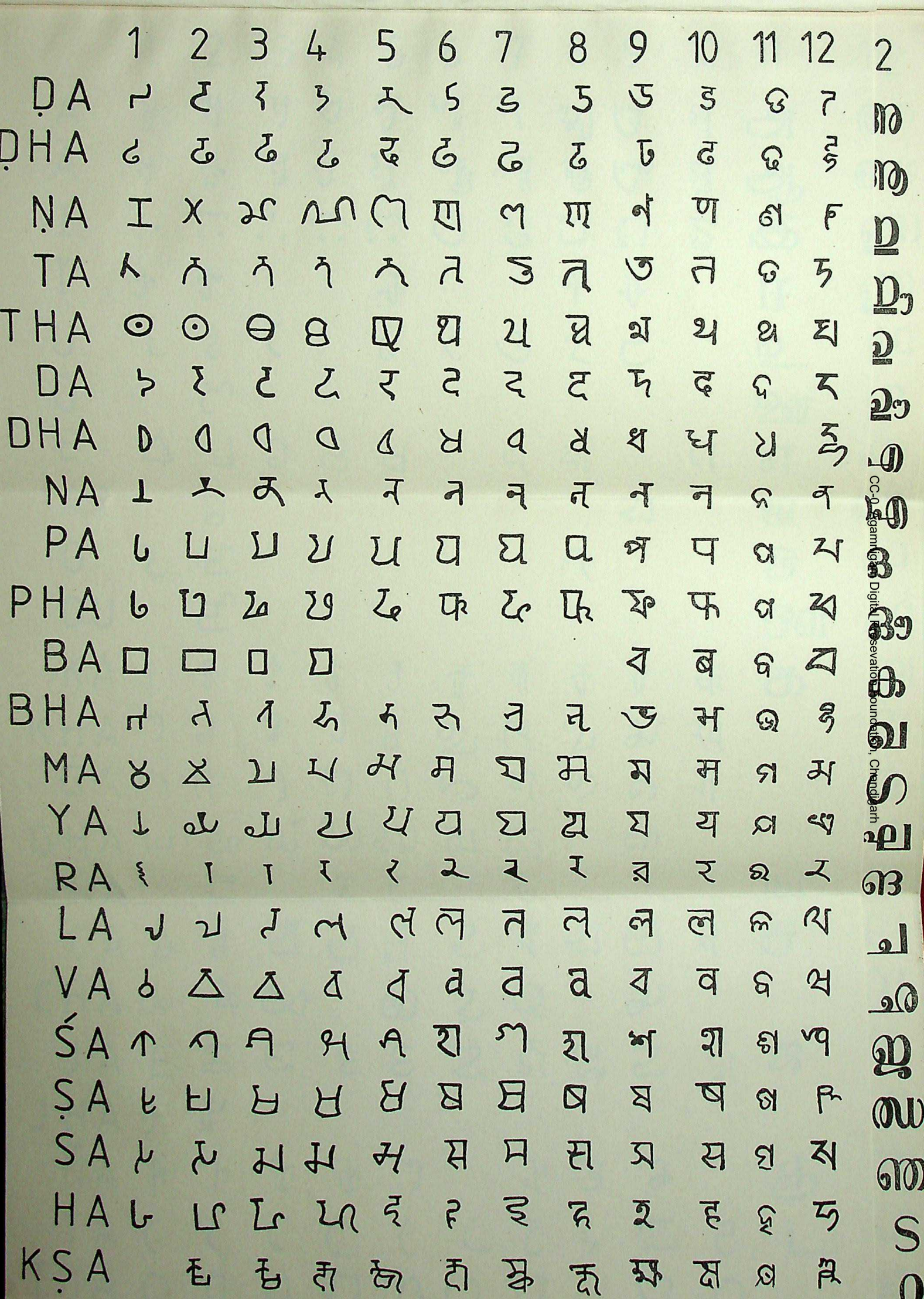

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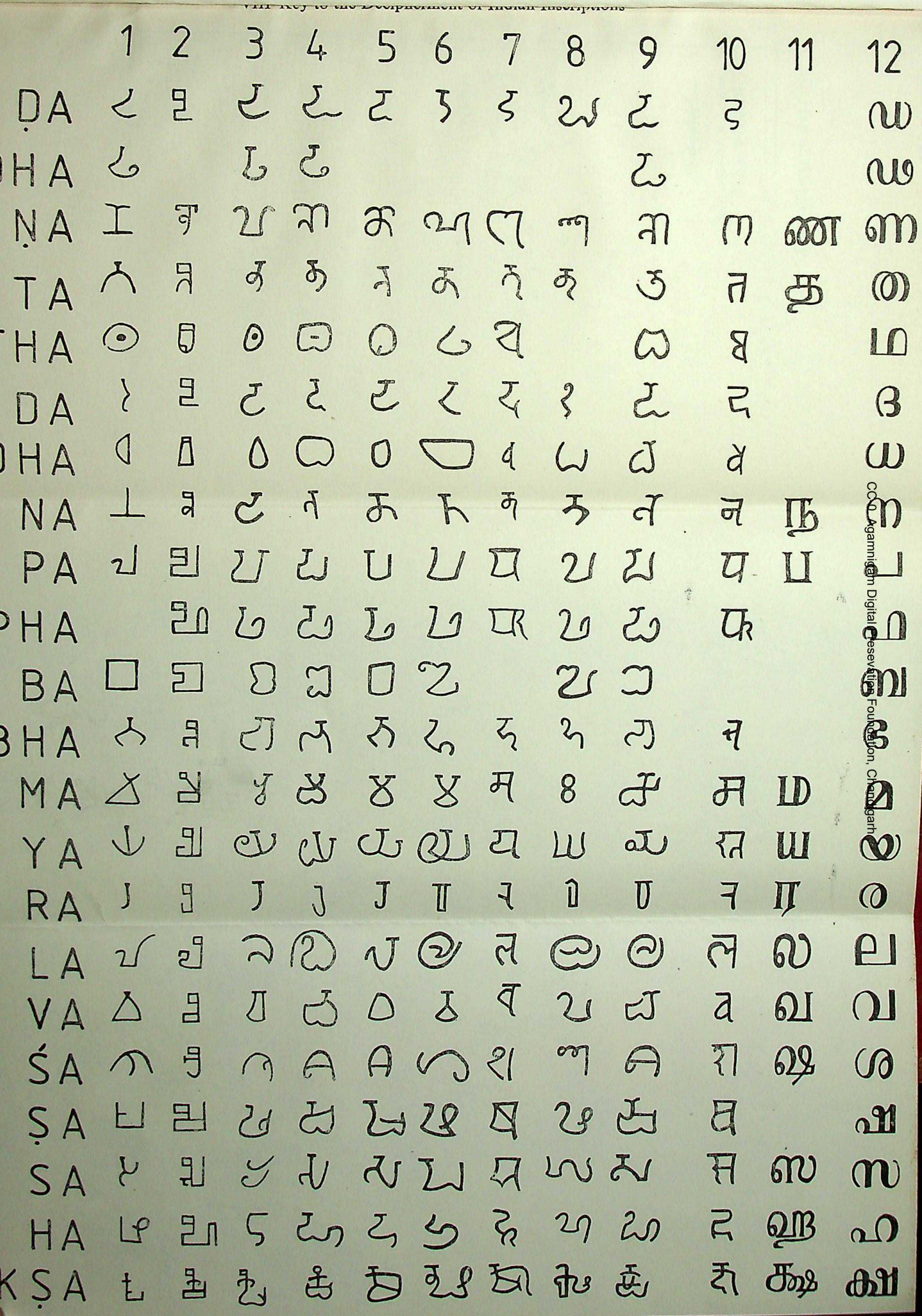

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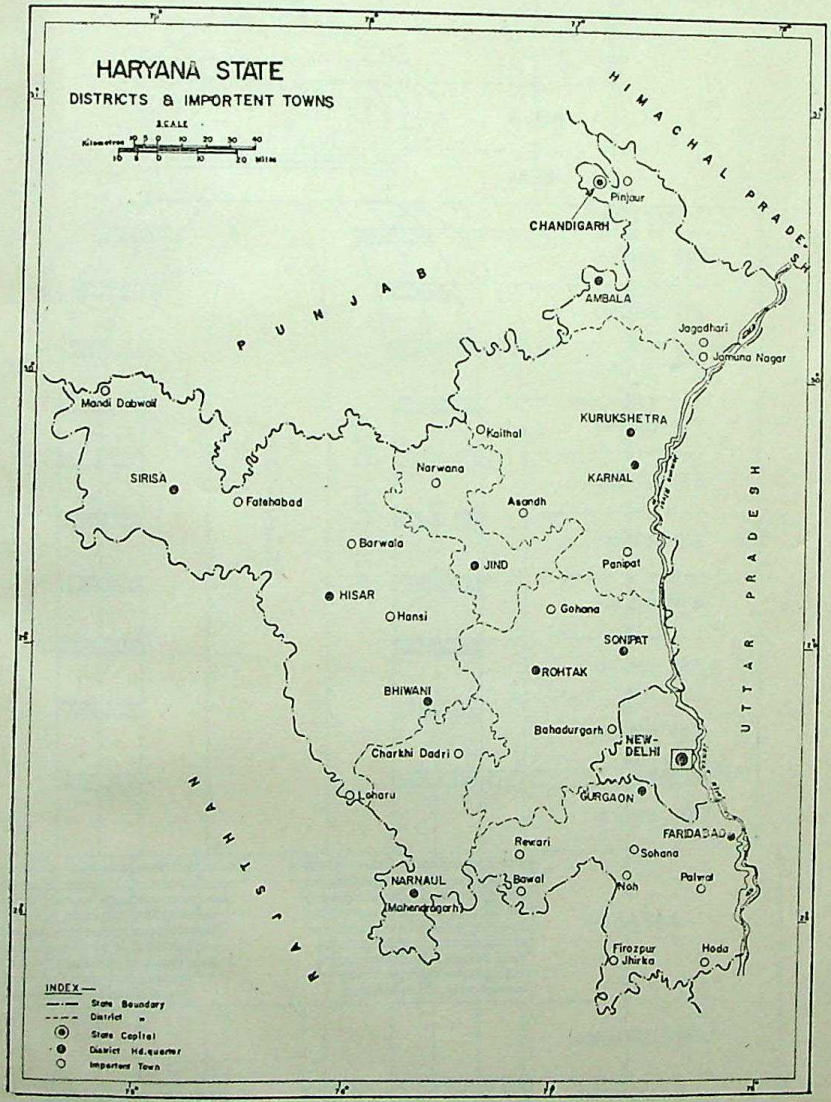
III Map of Haryana State (Districts & Important Towns)



IV Principal segments of the Rekha Deul of the Lingarāja complex

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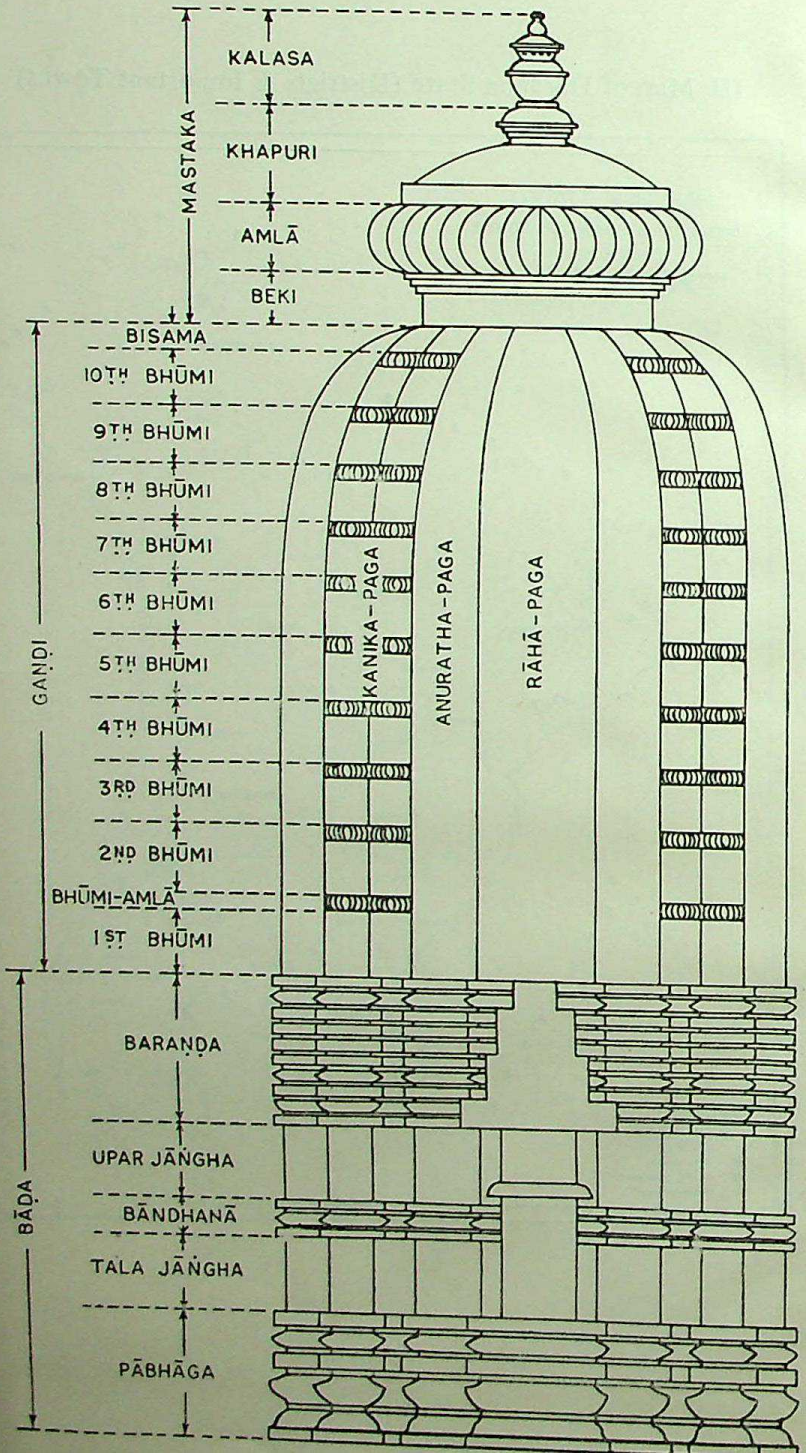

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